

M. Richard, "Les textes hagiographiques du codex Athos Philothéou 52", *AB* 93 (1975) 150, 154 (BHG 1322v in a recension of the pseudo-Anastasian *Erotapokriseis* CPG 7746); J.E. Bruns, "The 'Altercatio Jasonis et Papisci', Philo, and Anastasius the Sinaite", *ThS* 43 (1973) 287-294; D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, Assen-Minneapolis 1993, 210-211; K.-H. Uthemann, "Was verraten Katenen über die Exegese ihrer Zeit?", *Stimuli. Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für E. Dassmann*, ed. G. Schöllgen, C. Scholten, JbAC, Erg. 23, Münster 1996, 290.

### AMMONIUS ALEXANDRINUS

There are no doubts about the existence of an Alexandrian Ammonius, an exegete who wrote commentaries on the book of Daniel (PG 85, 1364-1381; 1823-1826) and on John's Gospel (PG 85, 1392-1524), but there are no sure data by which to identify him more precisely. He tends to be identified with the presbyter and *oikonomos* of the Alexandrian Church who subscribed a letter to the Emperor Leo in defence of the Council of Chalcedon against Timothy Aclurus. In the Catenae on John he is called "presbyter". Since he depends on authors of the 4th and 5th centuries, Reuss identifies him with the other Ammonius of Alexandria (CPG 6982), cited by Anastasius the Sinaite, who would have lived in the first half of the 6th century. Others, such as Elorduy, would identify him with the philosopher Ammonius Saccas: but this would take him back from the 6th century to the 3rd, an opinion not commonly accepted (cf. ANASTASIUS THE SINAITE, p. 320). The exegete seems to have lived between the 5th and 6th centuries. Apart from the two books cited, all we have of him are fragments of other biblical commentaries: on the Psalms (PG 85, 1361-1364), Luke, Acts (PG 85, 1524-1608), I Corinthians and I Peter (PG 85, 1608-1609). The fragments on Matthew (PG 85, 1381-1392) are spurious.

*Editions and studies*: CPG 5500-5509; T. Zahn, "Der Exeget Ammonius und andere Ammonius", *ZKG* 38 (1920) 1-22, 331-336; J. Reuss, "Der Exeget Ammonius und die Fragmente seines Matthäus- und Johannes Kommentars", *Biblica* 22 (1941) 13-20; Idem, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, TU 89, Berlin 1965, 196-358; Idem, "Der Presbyter Ammonius von Alexandria und sein Kommentar zum Johannes-Evangelium", *Biblica* 44 (1963) 159-170; R. Devreesse, *DBS* 1, 1137; 1158; 1174; 1203; 1228; Bardenhewer, 5, 83-86; E. Elorduy, "Ammonio en las catenas", *Estudios Ecl.* 44 (1969) 383-432; H. Dörrie, "Ammonios, der Lehrer Plotins", *Hermes* 83 (1955) 439-477, esp. 471 ff.; *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, edd. S. Döpp, W. Geerlings, Freiburg 1998, 23.

## VI SYRIAC LITERATURE by PAOLO BETTIOLO

### PREFACE

There is a passage in the second homily preached by Basil on Genesis in the last years of his life, in the second half of the 370s, that has often drawn the attention of readers, both ancient and modern, and I think it useful to introduce it here to illustrate some nodal problems posed by Syriac Christian literature as a whole and the study of it.

The bishop of Caesarea, commenting on Gen 1, 2 and strongly emphasizing his preference for an identification of the *spirit of God* mentioned in that verse with the Holy Spirit, clarifies its "moving" upon the waters by adducing the explanation of "a Syrian, as far from worldly wisdom as he was close to the knowledge of truth", who understood it in the light of the corresponding term in the Syriac version of the passage. That anonymous witness "said that the word of the Syrians was more expressive" than that of the Greeks and that, "by its kinship with the Hebrew, it came rather closer to the sense of the Scriptures" (cf. A.C. Way, *Saint Basil. Exegetic Homilies*, Washington (DC) 1963, 31 [*Hom.* II, 6, 2]).

The problem of identifying this "Syrian" has often drawn the attention of readers and scholars. The most convincing hypothesis is that lately argued by L. Van Rompay in "L'informatrice syrien de Basile de Césarée. À propos de Genèse 1, 2", *OCP* 58 (1992) 245-251: namely, that it was Eusebius, bishop of Emesa. This view is confirmed by a more recent publication by R.B. ter Haar Romeny, whose title it is interesting to record for the purpose of these introductory notes: *A Syrian in Greek Dress – The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis*, Lovanii 1997.

This is an important clue. Eusebius, earliest witness to the Antiochene exegetical traditions of which we have a solid literary legacy, was born at Edessa around 300, was trained to read Scripture at Caesarea, particularly by Eusebius (hence in an Origenian atmosphere), and was present at Antioch with Eustathius around 330. In his bilingualism, in

his biblical culture rich in multiple insights, perhaps also in his reluctance to involve himself in the burning theological discussions of the time, often too much dominated by speculative questions alien to him (*Non sum contentiosus, sed et abstineo me a contentione*, he wrote), he is a good witness to the composite environment of the Church of Syria, Hellenized certainly, but not without its own original insights, matured partly (perhaps especially) in a singular familiarity with Jewish traditions. "A Syrian in Greek dress", writes ter Haar Romeny: a Syrian, I would add, at times aware of the dignity and strength that Syriac derived from its closeness to Hebrew. This appears in the case of the exegesis of Gen 1, 2, on which cf. the volume cited above, especially pp. 174-183, though in the texts examined there it is not used, to understand the "moving" of the Spirit, in the way that appears from Basil's passage, but only in an introductory example, which nevertheless allows it to be likened to the Hebrew against the Greek. Strength and dignity of Syriac, it was observed, which even Basil, let us remember, granted to this Semitic language.

So not only did the first "Latin" cultivators of Syriac in the 14th century honour it as the language of Christ, "consecrated by his own divine mouth", and hence a link with a more faithful witness to him, part of a sensibility so much less perplexed than our own over-Hellenized theological traditions (cf. W. Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien in Europa*, Wiesbaden 1971; A. Van Roey, "Les études syriaques d'Andreas Masius", *OLP* 9 [1978] 141-158); not only do many, even now, often approach the texts of the "Semitic" communities of Syria diligent to gather exemplary traces of Christianities closer to the Jewish root, quickly superseded and yet by no means *minoritaire* among the Greek and Latin Churches, but even Eusebius, even Basil attested both their awareness of a voice clearly identifiable in them, evidence of a familiarity with "Israel" elsewhere more difficult, and their solicitude for it.

Certainly, there are scholars who invite due prudence in cultivating theories that sometimes seem justified more by anxieties of our own (anxieties of the West, even when Christian) than by the texts: when Jesus was born, they insist, "Syria", especially its Roman part, had long been a "Greek" region as to the culture prevalent among its urban elites, nor are we able to discern clearly what else of "native" it may have harboured, so to speak, so that Christianity there underwent substantially those variations and resolutions that it attests elsewhere, at least in the East; after all, they add, it was not the more organized Jewish communities in its cities, whether in Osrhoene or Adiabene or elsewhere, converting (if they ever did convert), that constituted the nucleus, still less the sole nucleus, of the Christian communities that

grew up there (thus especially Drijvers, whose various essays will be cited later). Every working hypothesis must thus be calmly checked, in a study of evidence and texts made slower by the paucity of the evidence of the origins and the complexity of later evidence, all the more at a time, like the present, of profound renewal of studies of the worlds that coexisted, converged or conflicted in the Hellenistic, Roman and Late Antique periods.

With this prudence, but also with an awareness of the irreducibility of some data, I have sought to draw up the brief succinct notes, mostly bibliographical, that follow.

## INTRODUCTION

What is introduced here is an altogether brief outline only of some of the authors and literary blocs, such as the whole of the anonymous versions of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, operative and handed down in Syriae. Despite its brevity, it is essential to preface it with a bare minimum of bibliographical information, useful for placing authors and texts within the history – including linguistic history – of those regions and milieus of which they are a valuable witness. It is also worthwhile to precede these notes with some further information on the chief instruments (bibliographical reviews, encyclopedias, monographs, collections of editions of texts, periodicals) available for the study of the literature, events, places, all the evidence of this vast field of the Christian East, to which the reader can easily turn to supplement the absences or insufficiencies of the following pages. Indeed, given the impossibility of providing a complete treatment and bibliography for each period, thematic area, author or text, a fairly selective identification has been made of subjects and their studies, in the latter case mentioning only those works that obey criteria of recognized significance and/or representativeness in the field of scientific output relative to the subject under examination, favouring especially the more recent contributions, which can inform and orient us on the earlier literature. I have tried, however, to be exhaustive in giving editions of the authentic writings of the chosen authors, who, I repeat, are certainly not all of them, nor are they limited to those of whom entire texts have survived.

### 1. Instruments

a) *Editions of texts*. There are three main collections of Syriac texts: the *Patrologia Syriaca* (PS), promoted by R. Graffin, of which only three volumes were issued at Paris between 1894 and 1926 (Syriac text with Latin version opposite); the *Patrologia Orientalis* (PO), founded by the same R. Graffin with the collaboration of F. Nau and continued

by F. Graffin, whose first fascicle was published at Paris in 1903, while it is now edited at Turnhout (Belgium) for Brepols, and which comprises Syriac texts accompanied by a version now mostly in French or English, as well as texts of the Coptic, Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian and also Greek patristic literatures; and finally the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO), founded at Paris in 1903 by J.-B. Chabot, who was its first director, and H. Hyvernat, and directed from 1948 by R. Draguet († 1980), who gave a decisive stimulus to the collection, henceforth published at Louvain (Belgium) at the publishing house of Peeters. The *Corpus*, which is subdivided into distinct series, as many as the languages of the Christian East, and also hosts an important section of *Subsidia* or monographs aimed at exploring individual authors, writings, themes or events of the history of the Eastern Churches, divides the edition of the text and its translation, now in a modern language, between two different volumes (on this collection cf. A. De Halleux, "L'apport du CSCO à l'histoire de la littérature syriaque", *Ephrem-Hunayn Festival – Baghdad* 1974, 291-298).

Besides these major collections, there are also some minor ones, often concluded, like that of A. Smith Lewis and M.D. Gibson, *Studia Sinaitica*, 12 voll., Cambridge 1894-1907; that of A. Mingana, *Woodbrooke Studies – Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic and Garshuni with a Critical Apparatus*, 7 voll., Cambridge 1927-1933; and the *Göttinger Orientforschungen – Reihe I: Syriaca*, begun by W. Strothmann in 1971 and published at Wiesbaden. Translations of Syriac texts, often accompanied by extensive introductions and useful notes, are also included in the *Sources chrétiennes* (SCH – Paris) and in the new collection of *Fontes christiani*, published at Freiburg.

Marginally to these brief notes on editions, minimal information on places of custody and catalogues of the vast Syriac manuscript material may be found in A. Desreumaux's recent work, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits syriaques*, Paris 1991.

b) *Manuals, bibliographical repertoria, dictionaries, periodicals*. There are many general introductions, more or less exhaustive and accurate, to the whole of Syriac literature, starting with the third, double volume of the *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (Rome 1719-1728) by the Maronite Giuseppe Simonio Assemani, the real *de facto* creator of the Vatican Library's Oriental Section, which assembled the mass of information then accessible on all Syriac authors, with the publication of some of their important texts. Among manuals still obtainable today are: R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, Paris 1907 (3rd ed., revised and augmented, of the volume first published in 1899, of which an anast. ed. is now available, Amsterdam 1970); A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der*

*syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Bonn 1922 (anast. ed., Berlin 1968); I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca*, Rome 1958 (in Latin); P. Bettiolo, "L'incarnati di patrologia siriana", A. Quacquarelli, *Complementi interdisciplinari di Patrologia*, Rome 1989, 503-603; M. Albert, "Langue et littérature syriaques", M. Albert, R. Beylot, R.-G. Coquin, B. Outier, C. Renoux, A. Guillaumont, *Christianismes Orientaux – Introduction à l'étude des langues et des littératures*, Paris 1993, 299-379; and S. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, Kottayam 1997.

Among bibliographical instruments, we should mention: for monographs and editions earlier than the 1960s: C. Moss, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books and Related Literature in the British Museum*, London 1962; for recent Syriac studies, the excellent successive restatements of S. Brock, "Syriac Studies 1960-1970 – A Classified Bibliography", *PdO* 1-2 (1973) 393-465; "Syriac Studies 1971-1980 – A Classified Bibliography", *ibid.* 10 (1981/1982) 291-412; "Syriac Studies 1981-1985 – A Classified Bibliography", *ibid.* 14 (1987) 289-360; "Syriac Studies 1986-1990 – A Classified Bibliography", *ibid.* 17 (1992) 211-301; "Syriac Studies 1991-1995 – A Classified Bibliography", *ibid.* 23 (1999) 241-350 (to this essential instrument I henceforth refer anyone who wants conveniently to supplement the bibliographical information appended to each individual subject or author of the present contribution, pointing out that Brock's bibliography, of which a partial publication now exists in a separate volume: S. Brock, *Syriac Studies: A Classified Bibliography [1960-1990]*, Kaslik 1996, is organized by subject and author).

To supplement these instruments, see also J. Assfalg, P. Krüger, *Kleines Wörterbuch des christlichen Orients*, Wiesbaden 1975 (French tr.: Turnhout 1991). On individual themes or authors of Christian Syria some articles in the following dictionaries are still useful: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Paris; *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément*, Paris; *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, Paris; *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, Paris; *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Berlin-New York.

Finally, devoted eminently to the literatures, history or problems of the Christian East are the following periodicals: *Le Muséon* (Louvain-la-Neuve); *Oriens christianus* (Wiesbaden); *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome); *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* (Leuven); *Melo*, from 1970 *Parole de l'Orient* (Kaslik, Lebanon); *Proche-Orient Chrétien* (Jerusalem); *The Harp – A Review of Syriac and Oriental Studies* (Kottayam/Kerala, India); *Aram* (Oxford). Lastly, the volumes of two further periodicals, whose publication ceased some time ago, but which have hosted many texts and studies of great interest: *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* (Paris 1896-1946) and *L'Orient syrien* (Paris 1956-1967).

## 2. Language, Milieu and History of the Churches of Syria: Fundamentals

Inscriptions, commercial documents, magic formulae and brief traces of Manichaean scriptures or translations datable from the 2nd to the 4th centuries, alongside more extensive and perhaps also, at least in some cases, older (though very disputed in their dating) "original" texts, enable us to investigate the time, ways and reasons why the Edessene language and script prevailed as the vehicle of all Syriac literature. Among the editions and studies that have recently re-examined or put forward new materials relating to this set of texts and problems, cf. firstly the collection of inscriptions edited by H.J.W. Drijvers, *Old Syriac (Edessene) inscriptions*, Leyden 1972 (but see now H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions from Edessa and Osrhoene. Texts, Translations and Commentary*, Leyden-Boston-Cologne 1999), supplemented by, among others, S. Brock, "Syriac Inscriptions: A Preliminary Check-List of European Publications", *AION* 38 (1978) 255-371; A. Desreumaux, "Pour une bibliographie sur l'épigraphie syriaque", *AION* 40 (1980) 704-708; H.J.W. Drijvers, "New Syriac Inscriptions", *Aram* 5 (1993) 147-161; and A. Desreumaux, A. Palmer, "Un projet international: le recueil des inscriptions syriaques", *VI Symposium Syriacum* 1992, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1994, 443-447. For evidence connected to commercial activities, see also the writings studied by J. Teixidor in "Les derniers rois d'Édesse d'après deux nouveaux documents syriaques", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 76 (1989) 219-222, and "Deux documents syriaques du III<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C. provenant du Moyen Euphrate", *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 1990, 146-166 (on these texts cf. S. Brock, "Some New Syriac Documents from the Third Century A.D.", *Aram* 3 [1991] 259-267). Still in connection with the linguistic history of Edessene Syriac, in its interweaving with other Aramaic dialects and its establishment as the leading literary language in the Christian communities of Syria and Mesopotamia between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, cf. also the studies of L. Van Rompay, "Some Remarks on the Language of Syriac Incantation Texts", *V Symposium Syriacum* 1988, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1990, 369-381, and especially "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Origins of Classical Syriac as a Standard Language – The Syriac Version of Eusebius of Caesarea's Ecclesiastical History", *Semitic and Cushitic Studies*, ed. G. Goldenberg, S. Raz, Wiesbaden 1994, 70-89 (with extensive bibliography), as well as R. Contini's essay, "Hypothèses sur l'araméen manichéen", *Annali di Ca' Foscari* 34/3 (1995) 65-107 (also with extensive bibliography), which also reports the interesting Manichaean materials later published by M. Franzmann and I. Gardner, "Section B: Syriac Texts", *Kellis Literary Texts*, 1, ed.

I. Gardner, with the collaboration of S. Clackson, M. Franzmann and K.A. Worp, Exeter 1996, 101-177. On the wider problem of the linguistic situation of the Semitic Near East in the Late Antique period, cf. finally F. Millar, "Il ruolo delle lingue semitiche nel vicino oriente tardo romano (V-VI secolo)", *Mediterraneo antico* 1/1 (1998) 71-94, while on overall relations between Syriac and Greek see the studies by S. Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet*, ed. A. Dietrich, AAWG 96 (1975) 80-108 (now in S. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity*, 4, London 1984); "Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek", *Journal of the Syriac Academy* 3 (1977) 406-422 (now in *Syriac Perspectives...* cit., 2); "From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning", *East of Byzantium*, ed. N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, R. Thompson, Washington (DC) 1982, 17-34 (now in *Syriac Perspectives...* cit., 5); and "Greek and Syriac in Late Antique Syria", *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. A.K. Bowmann, G. Woolf, Cambridge 1994, 149-160.

Part of the documents cited above and others are put to good use, with reference to an – also cultural – history of (Roman) Syria, in the sections devoted to this geographical area in F. Millar's *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337*, Cambridge (MA)-London 1993, which includes a well organized bibliography. The same area is covered in the studies of G. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord – le massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, 3 voll., Paris 1953-1958; L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents*, Paris 1962; and G. Tate, *Les campagnes de la Syrie du Nord du II<sup>e</sup> au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, un exemple d'expansion démographique et économique à la fin de l'Antiquité*, Paris 1992.

On the Church of Persia and its sites, cf. the many works of J.-M. Fiey: *Mossoul chrétienne*, Beirut 1959; *Assyrie chrétienne*, 3 voll., Beirut 1965-1968; *Nisibe, métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours*, CSCO 388 / Subs. 54, Louvain 1977; *Pour un Oriens Christianus novus. Répertoire des diocèses Syriaques orientaux et occidentaux*, Beirut-Stuttgart 1993, and the essays collected in *Communautés syriaques en Iran et Irak des origines à 1552*, London 1979. Cf. also E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CSCO 127 / Subs. 2, Louvain 1951; Idem, *Le couvent de Barsauma et le patriarcat jacobite d'Antioche et de Syrie*, CSCO 146 / Subs. 7, Louvain 1954.

On the canonistic literature produced by the Churches of Syria, see at least, for the Nestorian world, the materials of a collection of 8th-century conciliar decisions edited in J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil des Synodes nestoriens*, Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale 37, Paris 1902, and, for the West Syrian or

Jacobite world, the texts published in *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, ed. A. Vööbus, CSCO 367 and 375 / Syr. 161 and 163 (English tr.: 368 and 376 / Syr. 162 and 164), Louvain 1975 and 1976, as well as the studies of A. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1, *West-syrische Originalurkunden*, CSCO 307 and 317 / Subs. 35 and 38, Louvain 1970, and W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht*, 1, *Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Nestorianer (von den Anfängen bis zur Mongolenzeit)*; 2, *Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Westsyrier (von den Anfängen bis zur Mongolenzeit)*, SAW 388 and 543, Vienna 1981 and 1989.

Lastly, in these brief introductory notes, come the main literary sources, chronicles and histories produced by Syrian authors, Jacobites, Melkites or Nestorians, or translated into Syriac, on which may usefully be consulted the studies of J.-M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq*, CSCO 310 / Subs. 36, Louvain 1970 (with an overall critical review of the sources); S. Brock, "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1976) 17-36 (now in *Syriac Perspectives...* cit., 7); Idem, "Syriac Historical Writing: A Survey of the Main Sources", *Journal of the Iraqi Academy (Syriac Corporation)* 5 (1979/1980) 1-30 (now in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, 1, London 1992 – an extensive survey of the chronicle or historical material present in Syriac literature, excluding biographical or hagiographical writings, monastic histories, historical annotations in the margins of mss., and a few other minor texts; it also contains an essential bibliography of studies relating to the 27 works that it considers; at the end of the book are some additional bibliographical notes, in *Addenda et corrigenda*, 1-2); A. Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier: The Early History of Tur 'Abdin*, Cambridge 1990 (as is clear from the title, the volume is a sectorial historical investigation, relative to a restricted but nodal area and circles of Christian "Syria", but it provides much useful information on various Jacobite chronicles and hagiographical sources; the analytical index allows rapid identification of passages relative to the appraisal of each individual text); Idem, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles – including Two Seventh-Century Syriac Apocalyptic Texts Introduced, Translated and Annotated by S. Brock, with Added Annotation and Historical Introduction by R. Hoyland*, Liverpool 1993.

#### SYRIAC ECCLESIASTICAL CHRONICLES AND HISTORIES (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

1) *So-called Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*. Fourth section of the *Zuqnin Chronicle* (cf. *infra*, 11); its author, probably Edessene and Jacobite, seems to have written around the end of the second decade of the 6th century. It describes in detail the events of the years 495-506/507 at

Edessa, Amida and all Mesopotamia. There are some separate editions and translations (in English: W. Wright, *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite, Composed in Syriac, A.D. 507*, Cambridge 1882; F.R. Trombley, J.W. Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, Liverpool 2000), besides that of the chronicle that hands it down; on the text, cf. A. Palmer's recent essay, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite?", *Lingua restituta orientalis: Festgabe für J. Aßfalg*, ed. R. Schulz, M. Görg, Wiesbaden 1990, 272-284, and the study by A. Luther accompanying the German translation, *Die syrische Chronik des Josua Stylites*, Berlin-New York 1997.

2) *Chronicle of Edessa*. Anonymous, by a Chalcedonian author "with 'Nestorian' tendencies" (cf. S. Brock, *Syriac Historical Writing*); written soon after 540, it goes from 132/131 BC to AD 540: the text is in *Chronica minora I*, ed. I. Guidi, CSCO 1 / Syr. 1, 1-13 (Latin tr.: CSCO 2 / Syr. 2, 3-11), Paris 1903; anast. ed., Louvain 1955. On this text, cf. now W. Witakowski, "Chronicles of Edessa", *Orientalia Suecana* 33/35 (1984/1986) 487-498.

3) *Chronicle of Arbela*. Anonymous, relating to the affairs of the Churches of Adiabene between 104 and 511, it was published by A. Mingana in *Sources syriaques*, 1, Leipzig 1907 (1-75, text; 76-168, French tr.). Since the mid 1920s, many scholars have increasingly questioned its reliability, culminating in the extreme views of Fiey, who in 1967 maintained that it was a fake constructed by Mingana himself. Though it can certainly not be used to reconstruct the earliest events of the Christian history of Arbela, some (particularly Brock) maintain that for more recent periods it uses authentic valuable material, while stressing the need for further studies before it can be used with security. An anastatic edition is in *Die Chronik von Arbela*, ed. P. Kawerau, CSCO 467 / Syr. 199 (German tr.: CSCO 468 / Syr. 200), Lovanii 1985.

4) *Amida Chronicle to 569*. A section of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Pseudo-Zacharias the Rhetor, of which it constitutes books VII-XII, composed using many important documents from the reigns of Anastasius, Justin I, Justinian and Justin II, it can be attributed to a Jacobite monk who lived probably at Amida, in the second half of the 6th century; it can be read in *Historia ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, 2, ed. E.W. Brooks, CSCO 84 / Syr. 39, Paris 1921, 16-218 (Latin tr.: CSCO 88 / Syr. 42, Paris 1924, 11-147; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain 1953).

5) *Chronicle of John of Amida, bishop of Ephesus* (from 542; † 586). The *Chronicle* goes from the time of Julius Caesar to AD 585; composed in three parts, various-sized sections of the first two are incorporated in the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē* (on which cf.



*infra*, 11): these are included in the section of this text edited in CSCO 104 / Syr. 53; the third part, comprising the years around 571-585, is preserved, with lacunae, in a London ms. and is edited in W. Cureton, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bishop of Ephesus*, Oxford 1853, and then in *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia*, ed. E.W. Brooks, CSCO 105 / Syr. 54, Paris 1935 (Latin tr.: CSCO 106 / Syr. 55, Paris 1936; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain 1952). John is the author of a second work of great importance for the history of Monophysitism in the 6th century, the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, written between 566 and 586, and edited in: John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. E.W. Brooks, PO 17/1, 18/4 and 19/2, Paris, respectively 1923, 1924 and 1926; on this text cf. S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis. John of Ephesus and The Lives of the Eastern Saints*, Berkeley 1990.

6) *Ecclesiastical History of Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya*. This is a collection of *Histories of Holy Fathers Persecuted on account of the Truth*, between the 3rd and 6th centuries, written towards the end of the 6th century by one Barhadbeshabba, priest and *badoqa* (examiner of Scripture) at the Nestorian school of Nisibis and later probably bishop of Halwan, to be distinguished from the more or less contemporary Barhadbeshabba, disciple of Henana at Nisibis, to whom we will return on p. 472 (cf. the recent clarification of this distinction in G.J. Reinink, "Edessa Grew Dim and Nisibis Shone Forth: the School of Nisibis at the Transition of the Sixth-Seventh Century", *Centres of Learning. Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. J.H.W. Drijvers, A.A. MacDonald, Leyden-New York-Cologne 1995, 77-89, here n. 15 on p. 81). The edition of the text, edited, with French tr., by F. Nau, is in *La première partie de l'histoire de Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaïa*, PO 23/2, Paris 1932 (chh. 1-18) and *La seconde partie de l'histoire de Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaïa*, PO 9/5, Paris 1913 (chh. 19-32).

7) *Melkite Chronicle*. Anonymous, interested mainly in the ecclesiastical history of the 6th century, though it begins from the story of Adam and goes up to the death of Heraclius (641), compiled around the middle of the 7th century by a compiler keen to "place Severian Monophysitism within the history of heresies and to emphasize its repeated condemnation", it shows strong literary kinship with the later Jacobite *Chronicle to 846* (cf. *infra*, 14). It is introduced, edited, translated and annotated by A. De Halleux, "La chronique Melkite abrégée du ms. Sinait. syr. 10", *Muséon* 91 (1978) 5-44.

8) *Anonymous or "Guidi" Chronicle* (from the name of its editor). This is a Nestorian work composed probably around 670/680, somewhere in Khuzistan, important for the history of the last fifty years of the Sasanid

Empire; it was published, on the basis of a Vatican copy of the sole ms. to preserve it, in *Chronica minora*, 1, 15-39 (Latin tr., 13-32): an edition, based on the original, with Arabic version, has recently been edited by P. Haddad (Baghdad 1976).

9) *Rish Melle, or Summary of the History of the World*, by John bar Penkaye. A Nestorian monk trained at the monastery of Mar John of Kamul, living in the second half of the 7th century – the 15 volumes of *Rish Melle* were completed before 693/694 –, John is an author whose identity has sometimes been confused with that of the later, homonymous John of Dalyatha (cf. most recently R. Beulay, "Précisions touchant l'identité et la biographie de Jean Saba de Dalyatha", *PdO* 8 [1977-1978] 87-116, esp. 88-102, with an evaluation of his surviving writings; a version of the first century of his ascetic book known as *The Merchant* can be read in M. Albert, "Une centurie de Mar Jean Bar Penkaye", *Mélanges A. Guillaumont – Contribution à l'étude des christianismes orientaux*, Geneva 1988, 143-151, who places him, for his prudently presented Christological doctrines, among the "opponents of the official Nestorian Church", recalling the case of Henana of Adiabene – *ibid.* 144). Only books X-XV of the *Summary*, on which cf. T. Jansma, "Projet d'édition du ktaba d-resh melle, de Jean bar Penkaye", *OrSyr* 8 (1963) 87-106, have been published by A. Mingana in *Sources Syriacques*, 1, Mosul 1908, 2-171 (French tr. only of book XV, wholly devoted to the events of the 7th century: 172-203, with index; English tr. of the final section of book XIV and the greater part of XV in S. Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John Bar Penkaye's Rish Melle", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 [1987] 51-75 [now in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, cit., 2]).

10) *Chronicle of Jacob of Edessa* († 708). A continuation of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, it goes from the 20th year of the reign of Constantine up to 692, the year of its compilation; fragments remain, edited in *Chronicon Jacobi Edesseni*, ed. W.E. Brooks, CSCO 5 / Syr. 5, Paris 1905, 261-330 (Latin tr.: CSCO 6 / Syr. 6, Paris 1907, 197-258; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain 1955).

11) *Zuqnin Chronicle, or Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell-Mahre*. A Jacobite historical compilation in four parts, compiled probably at Zuqnin, a place near Amida (hence the name by which it is now preferably designated), it goes from the beginning of the world to c. AD 775: cf. *Incerti Auctoris Chronicon pseudo-dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 91 and 104 / Syr. 43 and 53, Paris 1927 and 1933 (anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain respectively 1953 and 1952; Latin tr. of the first, ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 121 / Syr. 66, Lovanii 1949; French tr. of the second, ed. R. Hespel, CSCO 507 / Syr. 213,

Lovanii 1989); the fourth part of the chronicle is edited, with a French version, by J.-B. Chabot under the title *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré, quatrième partie*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences philologiques et historiques, fasc. 112, Paris 1895. On this text cf. the two recent studies of W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre: A Study in the History of Historiography*, Uppsala 1987, and "Sources of Pseudo-Dionysius for the Third Part of his Chronicle", *Orientalia Suecana* 40 (1991) 252-275, which is an introduction to the version of this same section of the *Chronicle* subsequently edited by him: Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle, Part III*, Liverpool 1995.

12) *Chronicle to 813*. A brief anonymous chronicle, handed down by a 10th/11th-century ms., which marks the events of the years 775-813. It is edited as *Chronicon anonymum ad annum 813 pertinens* in *Chronica minora*, 3, ed. E.W. Brooks, CSCO 5 / Syr. 5, Paris 1905, 243-260 (Latin tr., ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 6 / Syr. 6, Paris 1907, 185-196; anast. ed. of both volumes, Louvain 1955).

13) *Chronicle to 819*. Written at Qartmin, not long after 818/819, the year with whose events it concludes its notes, which concern just the Christian era, indeed nearly half of it just the 7th and 8th centuries. This chronicle comes down to us in a 9th-century copy made by a certain Severus for his uncle, David, Jacobite bishop of Harran. It appears as *Chronicon anonymum A.D. 819 pertinens*, ed. A. Barsaüm, in the edition of the *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (cf. *infra*, 15), CSCO 81 / Syr. 36, Paris 1920, 1-22 (Latin tr., ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 109 / Syr. 56, Paris 1937, 1-16; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain, respectively 1953 and 1952).

14) *Chronicle to 846*. A brief work whose entries go from the creation of the world to 846/847; its final redactor may have been Nonnus of Harran, a Monophysite monk at Qartmin, later ordained bishop of Tur 'Abdin by Dionysius of Tell Mahre not long before his death, which took place in 845 (Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 11), or else David of Harran, "the 26th bishop consecrated by Patriarch John III (846-873)" and probable recipient of the copy of the *Chronicle to 819*, on whose text it partly depends (Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, 83). The work is edited in *Chronica minora*, 2, ed. E.W. Brooks, CSCO 3 / Syr. 3, Paris 1904, 157-238 (Latin tr. by J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 4 / Syr. 4, 121-180; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain 1955).

15) *Chronography of Elias of Nisibis* (1008-1046). Handed down by a ms. of 1018, in part probably by the hand of the author, a Nestorian, the work is edited in *Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni Opus Chronologicum*, ed. E.W. Brooks, J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 62:1-2 / Syr. 21-22, Paris, respectively

1910 and 1909 (Latin tr.: CSCO 63:1-2 / Syr. 23-24, Paris 1910; anast. ed. of all volumes: Louvain 1954; a French tr. of the text, with index of names, is in L. Delaporte, *Chronographie de Mar Elie bar Shinaya, metropolitane de Nisibe*, Paris 1910).

16) *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*. The work of the Jacobite patriarch Michael (1166-1199); the greatest of the Syrian chronicles, it extends from the creation of the world to the year 1194/1195. It is edited in J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche*, 4 voll., Paris 1899-1910 (anast. ed., Brussels 1963). On a small section of the *Chronicle*, its relationship with that of "Verus Dionysius" of Tell Mahre, whom it cites in that place, and the labours that both works require, cf. now I. Shahîd, "The Restoration of the Ghassanid Dynasty, A.D. 587: Dionysius of Tell-Mahre", *Aram* 5 (1993) 491-503.

17) *Chronicle to 1234*. An anonymous work of the first half of the 13th century, composed probably in the Jacobite monastery of Barsauma partly using materials from the work of Dionysius of Tell Mahre. It is edited in *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 81 / Syr. 36, Paris 1920 (Latin tr.: CSCO 109 / Syr. 56, Paris 1937; anast. ed. of both volumes: Louvain, respectively 1953 and 1952).

18) *Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus*. The work of the bishop (and "maphrian" of the East) of the Syrian Jacobite Church Abu l-Faraj Grigoryus Ibn al-'Ibri, known in the West as Bar Hebraeus (1225/1226-1286), the last great representative of medieval Syrian literature; the chronicle depends in large part on Michael's work, which it continues up to its author's own time. The first part, concerning secular chronography, is edited in E.A.W. Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-faraj, 1225-1286*, 2 voll. (1: English tr.; 2: facsimile reproduction of ms. syr. Bodl. Hunt. 52), London 1932; anast. ed., Amsterdam 1976; the second part, concerning religious history, is edited, with Latin tr., in *Gregorii barhebraei Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. J.B. Abbeloos, T.J. Lamy, 3 voll., Lovanii 1872-1877.

# I. FROM THE 2ND TO THE EARLY 4TH CENTURY: CHRISTIANITIES TAKE ROOT IN SYRIA

The establishment of a "Syriac Christianity" as a "third cultural tradition" alongside Greek and Latin, to use an expression of S. Brock (*Eusebius and Syriac Christianity*, cit., 212), is a controversial process, so much so that H.J.W. Drijvers has re-used the phrase polemically, emphasizing that its use is legitimate only if that tradition is understood as "not fundamentally different from what was thought and written in Greek-speaking Syria" (*Early Syriac Christianity...* cit., 159 and esp. 173), thus *de facto* voiding it of any strong individuality: Syriac, he wrote elsewhere, "is not host to a different culture than Greek; both languages are an expression and vehicle of the same Hellenistic civilization", in all its varied make-up (H.J.W. Drijvers, *Syrian Christianity and Judaism*, 126).

One of the points around which discussion revolves is that of the version of Scripture. Primarily, of the Scriptures of Israel: who was their promoter and author? The Jewish community or one of the Christian communities of Edessa? And if the former, what role did that Jewish milieu play in the evolution of Christianity in Syria? Secondly, of the Christian Scriptures: was the Gospel originally known in Syria a Greek or an Aramaic one? And if, at least fairly early, the Syrian Churches knew (and read) a Greek Gospel or one built on Greek texts and traditions, did they not also accept and welcome more archaic Aramaic traditions, of which we have sure traces? And were these at first not current in Jewish milieus, the very ones probably linked to that version of the Scriptures just spoken of, so that acceptance of Jesus was in no way incompatible with their own tradition, and so that by this route too they would have significantly influenced any future Christian community in the Syriac world? M. Weitzman, for example, reformulating old views, recently maintained, on the basis of a renewed analysis of the variants of the Syriac text, that the *Peshitta* is a Jewish translation and the work of "a single school", which worked between the beginning of the 2nd and, at latest, that of the 3rd century (*From Judaism to Christianity*, 163, 157-158). He also maintained that the Judaism reflected in it differs from rabbinic Judaism and expresses a tradition rooted in "a popular movement, hostile to temple worship, going back to biblical times" (ibid. 165-166). Its heirs, translators of the text, would have adopted Christianity as being more consistent than Rabbinism "with the religious

values most dear to them" (ibid. 167); and their hostility to any gnostic solution (ibid. 158) would also have been transmitted, with the Scriptures, to the Christian community, leaving a decisive mark on it. S. Brock, J. Joosten and others have reinforced these hypotheses on the tendency of the so-called "New Testament".

Against this, Drijvers holds that the Christians of Syria were mainly of gentile origin and explains the progressive assumption by a growing number of them, the "orthodox", not just of Israel's books, which they would have had translated from Hebrew originals, but also of many of Israel's traditions, as part of the encounter that saw them engaging with Marcionite or at any rate "heretical" groups and propaganda. There would be no reason to hypothesize any non-rabbinic Judaism in Edessa, given the links between that city's Jewish community and that of nearby Nisibis, then the seat of a famous academy in which a rabbinic Judaism is attested, nor to hypothesize any particularly active role of that community in the origins and definition of Christianity in Syria (cf. H.J.W. Drijvers, *Syriac Christianity and Judaism*, 138-143; *Early Syriac Christianity...* cit., 174-175). 2nd-century Edessa, at the height of its intellectual splendour, would, on the contrary, have been characterized mainly by a cultivated, highly Hellenized Christianity like that of Bardesanes, the philosopher and courtier who celebrated the Logos/Christ as regulator of chaos and interior teacher, able to direct man's free mind to good works and control of the body and of worldly affairs, "authentic ideal of the wise, well-educated noble", "representative of the central values of the society at the very centre of power", the court (idem, *Apocryphal Literature...*, 238), or alternatively like that of Tatian and of the apocrypha that would seem to be consistent with his teaching (*Acts of Thomas and Doctrine of Addai*, especially), for whom Christ is not a teacher, but an aid in the struggle against the age, in the *enkrateia* that must dominate the life of a Christian aiming at mystical marriage with his saviour, so that, pure, he may "regain his original immortality", the harmony of an alternative world to that of the present age (ibid. 239).

What should at any rate, incidentally, be emphasized in substantial parts or sections of these or other works, e.g. the *Odes of Solomon*, is the symbolic and poetic character they often assume: a highly elaborate poetry, heavily didactic in character, which is connected with the later works of Ephrem and his school, thus constituting a major trait of the first Christian literature of the Syrian world. A poetry, also, perhaps inside the biblical wisdom traditions, which some connect with the milieu of the scribes "close to the Temple of Jerusalem and its liturgy", thought by some to have been present and active both in theological meditation and in the mission of the primitive Christian community (M.-J. Pierre, "La vierge prédicante...", 256 – for this essay cf. *infra*, STUDIES on the



*Odes of Solomon*, pp. 428 ff.), or perhaps expressive of a "non-Greek, non-Jewish", native Aramaic tradition (so Palmer in the conclusion of a 1993 essay, "A Lyre without a Voice", cited in connection with the literature on Ephrem's poetry, 391).

Those so far mentioned are not the only groups or movements of Israel operating in all the regions of Roman and Persian Syria, well beyond just the area of Edessa: we have recently and rightly been reminded of the scant attention given by research into the origins of Syriac-speaking Christianity to an author like "Elchasi", who between 116 and 117 produced a "manual of Christian conduct" whose role, e.g., in the Judaeo-Christian communities of southern Mesopotamia has only recently been fully revealed by the so-called Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis (F.S. Jones, *The Astrological Trajectory*...., 185).

Whatever the reasons for the different readings or suggestions and the verdict to be reached on them, it is yet certain that, to repeat Brock's calm concluding observations in the 1992 essay cited above, all that is known for certain or has been handed down to us, reliably datable, about the origins of Syrian Christianity is linked to events at the beginning of the 3rd century, to some fragments of Bardesanes and to the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, ascribable to his school. This alone is without ambiguity: every other datum or writing presents more or less important problems of interpretation, to do with its authenticity, its dating, its context, its language. In principle, "all that can be said with certainty is that by the end of the 2nd century Christianity was well established in Edessa (probably in various forms), and that by the end of the 3rd century it had spread to the surrounding villages. With the 4th century one particular form of Christianity emerges as 'orthodox' and from that date on we become much better informed, since later generations were only concerned to transmit literature of this particular provenance", for the most part destroying or altering the others and reconstructing, anyway, the history of their own origins (Brock, *Eusebius and Syriac Christianity*...., cit., 224 and 228-229).

The individual items that follow must be read within the problems and limitations brought out by these fleeting suggestions.

*Studies*: W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, Tübingen 1934 (2nd ed. G. von Strecker, 1964; English tr.: *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Philadelphia 1971 and London 1972 – on the opinions expressed in this study cf. T.A. Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined. The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church*, Lewiston-Queenston 1988); H.J.W. Drijvers, "Quakers and the Quakers. An Unknown Sect in Edessa in the Second Century A.D.", *Namen* 14 (1967) 104-129 (now in Idem, *East of Antioch. Studies in Early Syriac Christianity*, London 1984, xiv); J.B. Segal, *Edessa: "The Blessed City"*, Oxford 1970; S. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979) 212-232; W. Cramer, *Der Geist Gottes und des Menschen in früh-syrischer Theologie*. Münster

1979; G. Rouwhorst, "Les oraisons de la table dans le Judaïsme et les célébrations eucharistiques des chrétiens syriaques", *Questions liturgiques* 61 (1980) 211-240; H.J.W. Drijvers, "Cults and Beliefs at Edessa", *EPRO* 82, Leyden 1980; Idem, *East of Antioch. Studies in early Syriac Christianity*, London 1984; Idem, "Apocryphal Literature in the Cultural Milieu of Osrhoëne", *Apocrypha – Le champ des apocryphes* 1 (1990) 231-247; Idem, "Syrian Christianity and Judaism", *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. J. Lieu, J. North, T. Rajak, London-New York 1992, 124-146; M. Weizman, "From Judaism to Christianity: The Syriac Version of the Hebrew Bible", *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*.... cit., 147-173; S. Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity", *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, ed. H.A. Attridge, G. Hata, Leyden-New York-Cologne 1992, 212-234; H.J.W. Drijvers, *History and Religion in Late Antique Syria*, London 1994; G. Koshelenko, A. Bader, V. Gaibov, "The Beginnings of Christianity in Merv", *Iranica Antiqua* 30 (1995) 55-70; H.J.W. Drijvers, "Early Syriac Christianity: Some Recent Publications", *VC* 50 (1996) 159-177; G. Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity", *VC* 51 (1997) 72-93; J. Joosten, "La tradition syriaque des évangiles et la question du 'substrat araméen'", *RHPHR* 77 (1997) 257-272; F.S. Jones, "The Astrological Trajectory in Ancient Syriac-Speaking Christianity (Elchasi, Bardaisan, and Mani)", *Atti del Terzo congresso internazionale di studi "Manicheismo e oriente cristiano antico"* – 31.8-5.9.1993, ed. C. Cirillo, A. Van Tongerlo, Turnhout 1997, 183-200.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT PESHITTA

As has been observed, perhaps not without some exaggeration, the "Old Testament *Peshitta*", or "simple" or "common" Syriac version (this is the meaning of the adjective *peshitta*) of the Scriptures of Israel "is the earliest literary corpus in Syriac, with an unequalled influence on all subsequent literature in that language" (Joosten, *La Peshitta de l'Ancien Testament*...., 385). Handed down, in its text closest to the original, by 5th-century mss. and by a 9th-century Florentine codex linked to them, the *Peshitta* depends on a Hebrew source which it translates, also using traditions present in midrashic and targumic literature. The Introduction to this chapter has already mentioned the different interpretations of the circles that produced it; recently, the study of the OT citations in Taitan's *Diatessaron*, composed around 170, establishing their dependence on the text of the *Peshitta*, has strengthened the hypothesis of a pre-Christian formation of the latter, especially in its older parts, such as the Pentateuch. Those more recently translated, such as the books of Proverbs or Psalms, which show evidence of frequent contacts with the Greek text of the Septuagint, would seem to attest a greater proximity to Christian thought, interpretable, according to Weitzman, as the Christianization of the Jewish community that was producing them.

Begun before 150, the *Peshitta* seems to have been completed in the early 3rd century: from then on, indeed, it found a reception only in the Christian communities of Syria. These brief notes on the Syriac version

of the Scriptures of Israel would not be complete without a mention of the translation of their hexaplar text, which Paul, Monophysite bishop of Tella, made between 615 and 617. This version did not supplant that of the *Peshitta*, but was used in biblical exegesis, especially in the West. *Bibliography*: P.B. Dirksen, *An Annotated Bibliography of the Peshitta of the Old Testament*, Leyden 1989 (updated in *The Peshitta as a Translation*, edd. P.B. Dirksen, A. Van der Kooij, Leyden 1995, 221-236).

*Editions*: The first printed edition of the *Peshitta*, from a late manuscript, witness to a state of the text far from the original, edited by Gabriel the Sionite, is in the polyglot Bible published by G.M. Le Jay at Paris in 1645. An edition still widespread through continual reprintings is that edited in 1823 by S. Lee for the British and Foreign Bible Society for the use of the Syro-Oriental community of South India. Recently reprinted by the Trinitarian Bible Society is another edition which appeared at Urmia in 1852, edited by J. Perkins, through the good offices of the Presbyterian Mission, and conceived for the needs of the Nestorian communities of that region. Finally, edited by C.J. David, Syro-Catholic archbishop of Damascus and G. Abdisho-Khayyat, Chaldaean archbishop of Amid, the Mosul edition, later republished, with corrections, by J.-M. Vosté in 1951 at Beirut.

The first scientific edition of the *Peshitta*, from the 1960s, comes from the Peshitta Institute of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Leyden, founded by P.A.H. de Boer. Under the general title *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version*, the edition is not yet complete.

Some concordances exist, published by W. Strothmann and his collaborators in the *Göttinger Orientforschungen*, Wiesbaden, on Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth (1973), the Psalms (1976), the Prophets (4 volumes, 1985) the Pentateuch (4 volumes, 1986) and the "Mautab" (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Song of Songs and Job: 6 volumes, 1991), unfortunately based on the Urmia edition. A concordance based on the text edited at Leyden is in preparation (but see that, limited to Ecclesiastes, edited by M.M. Winter, Leyden 1976, and, for the text of Hosea, P.G. Borbone, F. Mandraci, *Concordanze del testo siriano di Osea*, Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze, Classe Sc. Mor. Stor. c.Fil. V/11, Turin 1987), as well as the recent volume ed. by P.G. Borbone, K.D. Jenner, *The Old Testament in Syriac-Peshitta version*. Part V, Concordance. I: Pentateuch, Leyden 1997.

The version by Paul of Tella, known as *græca* or *syro-hexaplar*, has been edited by A.M. Ceriani in *Monumenta sacra e profana VII. Codex syro-hexaplaris Ambrosianus photolith.*, Milan 1874; cf. also: W. Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts*. Edited, Commented upon and Compared with the Septuagint, Leyden 1968; the two works by A. Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla. A facsimile edition of a Midyat Ms Discovered 1964*, CSCO 369 / Subs. 45, Louvain 1975, and *The Book of Isaiah in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla. A facsimile edition of Ms St. Mark I in Jerusalem with an Introduction*, CSCO 449 / Subs. 68, Louvain 1983; A. De Halleux, "Glaures syro-hexaplares dans les florilèges grégoriens", *Muséon* 99 (1986) 251-290; and finally R.J.V. Hiebert, *The "Syrohexaplaric" Psalter*, Atlanta (GA) 1989.

*Studies*: *The Peshitta: Its Early Text and History*, ed. P.B. Dirksen, M.J. Mulder, Leyden 1988; J. Joosten, "The Old Testament Quotations in the Old Syriac and Peshitta Gospels. A Contribution to the Study of the Diatessaron", *Textus* 15 (1990) 55-76; P.B. Dirksen, *La Peshitta dell'Antico Testamento*, Italian ed. by P.G. Borbone, Brescia 1993 (with an ample, if brief, bibliography); M.D. Koster, "Peshitta Revisited. A Reassessment of Its Value as a Version", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 28

(1993) 235-268; M. Weitzman, "Peshitta, Septuagint and Targum", *VI Symposium Syriacum* 1992, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1994, 51-84; Y. Maori, *The Peshitta Version of the Pentateuch and Early Jewish Exegesis*, Jerusalem 1995 (in Hebrew); J. Joosten, "La Peshitta de l'Ancien Testament dans la recherche récente", *RHPH* 76 (1996) 385-395; S. Brock, "The Peshitta Old Testament - Between Judaism and Christianity", *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19 (1998) 483-502; M. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament. An Introduction*, Cambridge 1999.

## OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA: II BARUCH AND IV ESDRAS

The undated, perhaps 7th-century, Western Ambrosian ms. that provided the basic text for the Leyden edition of the Old Testament *Peshitta* also contains, among other things, two apocryphal writings, of whose text, in its entirety, it is the sole Syriac witness, but which have left traces in the traditions - including liturgical - of the Eastern Churches. These are the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, known as II Baruch (whose final section, independently circulated, can be read in most Syriac Bibles), and IV Esdras. Whatever their original language may have been, these important apocalypses, probably of the early 2nd century, reached the communities of Syria through translations made from a Greek text. In the case of II Baruch, the Syriac, with the Arabic version that depends on it, is the sole witness of the work.

*Editions*: *Apocalypse of Baruch*, ed. S. Dederling, in *The Old Testament in Syriac According to the Peshitta Version*, IV/3. Leyden 1973 (just text, and relatively to chapters 1-77; for the letter, chapters 78-87, cf. now the text, with the notes relative to it, included in *The Arabic Text of the Apocalypse of Baruch*, ed. F. Leenhuys, A.F.J. Klijn and G.J.H. Van Gelder, Leyden 1986, 117-137 [on odd pages, with English tr.] and 151-154; French tr. with important introduction and commentary: P. Bogaert, *L'Apocalypse de Baruch*, 1-2, SC 144-145, Paris 1969; Italian tr., ed. P. Bettolo, in *Apocrifi dell'Antico Testamento*, 2, ed. P. Sacchi, Turin 1989, 147-233); *IV Esdras*, ed. R.J. Bidawid, in *The Old Testament... cit.*, IV/3 (just text; Italian tr. of the Latin version with attention to Syriac variants, ed. P. Marrassini, in *Apocrifi dell'Antico Testamento*, cit., 2, 235-377).

## DIATESSARON, VETUS SYRA AND NEW TESTAMENT PESHTITTA

The complex problem of the formation of the Syriac New Testament, at least in relation to its evangelical section, the only one we will discuss here, presupposes the acquisition of a few facts. First, we should know that from the first decades of the 5th century the Syriac Churches, probably on the initiative of Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, and at any rate in concomitance with the definitive triumph of the "Catholic" component among them, all read and used a text of the Gospels that had only recently been formed. Previously their liturgical readings, for the gospel pericopes,

had been based on the *Diatessaron*, that harmony of the Gospels composed by Tatian around 170. Between the 1840s and the 1890s, however, two successive discoveries brought to our knowledge two different witnesses (the Syro-Sinaitic palimpsest – late 4th century – and the Curetonian ms. – 5th century) to what seems one and the same version of the “separate gospels”. This version, customarily designated the *Vetus syra*, would have provided the basis for fixing the text of the *Peshitta*, which it predated, and would in turn have been made using, at least in part, the *Diatessaron*, which would thus predate it and would allow it to be dated, approximately, to the 3rd century. Is it possible to go beyond Tatian’s work? It seems that, in constructing his “harmony”, he used not just the “canonical” Gospels, but also a “fifth source”, whose material sometimes agreed with readings proper to texts like the *Gospel to the Hebrews* or the *Gospel of Thomas*. It has been proposed to identify this source with that Aramaic tradition of Palestinian origin, independent of the Greek Gospels, that had first conveyed a knowledge of Jesus to the peoples of Syria, pivoting, to begin with, on the region’s Jewish communities. Certainly, West Aramaic expressions or, more generally, elements left a deep mark not just and perhaps not so much on the *Peshitta* as on the more general exegetical and “spiritual” meditation of the Churches of Syria, as many recent studies have demonstrated (cf. e.g. S. Brock, *The Lost Old Syriac...*).

While these are the probable stages of the gradual formation of the “simple” or “common” version of the Gospels in Syria, we cannot ignore some later developments which, among the West Syrians, more or less radically modified their text, though without prevailing at an ecclesial level. Early in the 6th century, Philoxenus, Monophysite bishop of Mabbūgh, dissatisfied with the text of the *Peshitta* because of the “Nestorian” traits he perceived in some of its readings, got the *chorepiscopus* Polycarp to make a new translation from the Greek Gospels, for dogmatic purposes, of which we have only a few fragments. About a century later, in 616, in a monastery near Alexandria, another bishop of Mabbūgh, deposed from his see on account of his Monophysite faith, undertook a translation of the Greek text of the New Testament, perhaps also using the Philoxenian one: this was Thomas of Harqel, who included in his work those apostolic writings (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude) not previously included in the canon of the Eastern Churches.

*Editions:* a) *Diatessaron*: cf. the editions of Ephrem’s commentary on the *Diatessaron*, cited among that author’s works, our main source of knowledge of the evangelical harmony in its Syriac form. b) “*Separate gospels*”: Curetonian ms.: W. Cureton, *Remains of a Very Ancient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, Hitherto Unknown in Europe*, London 1858; Syro-Palestinian palimpsest: A.S. Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion do-niepharreshe; Being the Text of the Sinai or Syro-Antiochene*

*Palimpsest, Including the Latest Additions and Emendations, with the Variants of the Curetonian Text, Corroborations from Many Other MSS., and a List of Quotations from Ancient Authors*, London 1910. *Peshitta*: P.E. Pusey, G.H. Gwilliam, *Tetraevangelium Sanctum iuxta simplicem Syrorum versionem ad fidem codicum, Massorae, editionum denuo recognitum*, Oxford 1901 (this is the text used in editions of the NT edited, from 1905, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and in those sponsored, from 1988, by the United Bible Society – to be supplemented, for 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude and Revelation, with J. Gwynn, *The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown*, Dublin 1897, anast. ed., Amsterdam 1981; and *Remnants of the Later Syriac Versions of the Bible, Part I: New Testament*, London 1909, anast. ed., Amsterdam 1973, also used in the complete reprintings of the NT cited above, for the sections indicated). A critical edition of the Syriac NT is in preparation, promoted by the University of Münster (Germany), under the title *Das neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung*, of which three volumes have appeared: B. Aland (in collaboration with A. Juckel), I, *Die grossen Katholischen Briefe*, Berlin-New York 1986 (cf. the review by A. De Halleux: *Muséon* 99 [1986] 359-362); B. Aland, A. Juckel, II, *Die Paulinischen Briefe, Teil 1. Römer und 1. Korintherbrief*, Berlin-New York 1991 (cf. the review by A. De Halleux: *Muséon* 104 [1991] 389-391); Idem, II, *Teil 2. 2. Korintherbrief, Galaterbrief, Epheserbrief, Philipperbrief und Kolosserbrief*, Berlin-New York 1995. *Versio harqeleuse*: J. White, *Sacrorum Evangeliorum, Actorum Apostolorum et Epistolarum tam catholicarum quam paulinarum Versio Syriaca Philoxeniana*, 3 voll., Oxonii 1778-1803; A. Vööbus, *The Apocalypse in the Harklean Version. A Facsimile Edition of Ms. Mordin Orth. 35, fol. 143r-159v, with an Introduction*, CSCO 400 / Subs. 56, Louvain 1978. The volumes of the Münster edition, cited above, contain the text of the Harqel version. A comparative publication of the texts of the various Syriac versions of the Gospels is now provided by G.A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*, 4 voll., Leyden 1996 (vol. 1 contains an ample *Introduction to the Harklean Text* by A. Juckel, xxxi-lxxxii; on the publication, cf. the review by T. Baarda: *Novum Testamentum* 29 [1996] 405-413).

A concordance of the Syriac NT is offered by G.A. Kiraz, *A Computer-generated Concordance to the Syriac New Testament*, Leyden 1993; cf. *The Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the Aramaic New Testament*, New Knoxville (OH) 1985; and W. Jennings, U. Gantillon, *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament*, Oxford 1926, anast. ed., Oxford 1962.

*Studies:* J. Kerschensteiner, *Der altsyrische Paulustext*, CSCO 315 / Subs. 37, Louvain 1970; B.M. Metzger, *The early Versions of the New Testament. Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations*, Oxford 1977 (for the *Peshitto* cf. ch. 1); S. Brock, “Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources”, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979) 212-232; Idem, “The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harklean Problem”, *New Testament Textual Criticism, Essays in Honour of B.M. Metzger*, ed. E.J. Epp, G.D. Fee, Oxford 1981, 325-343; B. Aland, “Bibelübersetzungen – 4: Die Übersetzung ins Syrische. 2: Neues Testament”, *TRE* 6 (1980) 189-196; A. Vööbus, *Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac II*, CSCO 496 / Subs. 79, Louvain 1987; J. Joosten, *The Syriac Language of the Peshitto and Old Syriac Versions of Matthew. Syntactic Structure, Translation Technique and Inner Syriac Developments*, Ph.D. Thesis Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1988 (now published, Leyden 1996); S. Brock, “The Lost Old Syriac at Luke I: 35 and the Earliest Syriac Terms for the Incarnation”, *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century*, ed. W.L. Petersen, Notre Dame-London 1989, 117-131; W. Strothmann, “Die Handschriften der Evangelien in der Versio

Horacensis", *Lingua restituta orientalis: Festgabe für J. Assfalg*, ed. R. Schultz, M. Görg, Wiesbaden 1990, 367-375; J. Joosten, "The Text of Mt 13, 21a and Parallels in the Syriac Tradition", *NTS* 37 (1991) 153-159; Idem, "West Aramaic Elements in the Old Syriac and Peshitta Gospels", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110/112 (1991) 271-289; W.L. Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron. Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance and History in Scholarship*, Leyden 1994; J.P. Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations. A Comparison of the Language and Translation Method Used in the Old Syriac, the Diatessaron and the Peshitto*, Louvain 1994; A. Juekel, "Zur Revisionsgeschichte der Harklensis", *Bericht der Hermann Kunst-Stiftung zur Förderung der neutestamentlichen Textforschung für die Jahre 1992-1994*, Münster 1995, 50-68; S. Brock, "A Palestinian Targum Feature in Syriac", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46 (1995) 271-282; G. Lenzi, "L'antica versione siriana dei Vangeli dopo centocinquanti anni di ricerca", *Annali di scienze religiose* 3 (1998) 263-278.

### ODES OF SOLOMON

This is one of the most interesting works of the very earliest Syriac literature: 42 odes, in very careful writing, probably Syriac in their original redaction, but also surviving in a Greek recension perhaps by the same hand as the former, which the anonymous Christian author circulated under the pseudonym of King Solomon, to signify that the speaker was "the glorious figure of regal wisdom of which he is the type" (M.-J. Pierre, *Odes... - Introduction*, 26). Quite close to Johannine, but also, it is said, to Qumranic vocabulary and themes, they have generally been considered an old document, from the early 2nd century, which the most recent interpreter would refer to an author proceeding from the "Judaean-Christian milieu of Jerusalem, close to the Temple, mindful of traditional ways of writing and interpretation, ascetic in tendency, a composer of liturgical chants, perhaps even linked to the family of Jesus", interpreter of a "rather primitive" sophianic meditation (ibid. 54).

Against this, Drijvers in particular has aimed in many studies to demonstrate that the *Odes* originate from a bilingual 3rd-century cultural milieu, given the anti-Marcionite ideas and traces of an Antiochene Christology characteristic of the 2nd century which they supposedly show, the influence of Tatian's *Diatessaron* and of the encratite interpretation of the Christian tradition which they supposedly condemn. Moreover, he maintains that, with and against the Manichaean *Psalms*, to which they are then compared, they reveal the ferments of an unsettled and lively period among the "Christian" communities of Edessa in the last decades of the 3rd century.

*Editions*: J.H. Charlesworth, *The Odes of Solomon - The Syriac Text. Edited with Translation and Notes*, Chico (CA) 1973; Idem, *The Odes of Solomon. Papyri and Leather Manuscripts of the Odes of Solomon*, Duke University, Durham (NC) 1981; M. Lattke, *Die Oden Salomos in ihre Bedeutung für Neues Testament und Gnosis*, 4 voll., Fribourg-Göttingen 1979-1986 (with German tr.); M. Franzmann, *The Odes*

*of Solomon. An Analysis of the Poetical Structure and Form*, Fribourg-Göttingen 1991 (with English tr.); M. Lattke, *Oden Salomos. Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Teil I - *Oden 1 und 3-4*, Göttingen 1999.

*Translations - Italian*: M. Erbetta, "Le Odi di Salomone", *Erbetta I/1, Vangeli. Testi giudeo-cristiani e gnostici*, Casale Monferrato 1982, 608-658.

*French*: M.-J. Pierre, *Les Odes de Salomon*, Turnhout 1994 (with introduction and commentary).

*Studies*: General introduction: M. Petit, "Odes de Salomon", *DSP* 11 (1982) 602-608.

a) *Odes* and New Testament: D.E. Aune, "The Odes of Solomon and Early Christian Prophecy", *NTS* 28 (1982) 435-460; M. Lattke, "The Apocryphal Odes of Solomon and New Testament Writings", *ZNTW* 73 (1982) 294-301; J.T. Sanders, "Nag Hammadi, Odes of Solomon and New Testament Christological Hymns", *Gnosticism and the Early Christian World*, ed. J.E. Goehring et al., Sonoma 1990, 51-66.

b) Language, milieu and time of redaction: L. Abramowski, "Sprache und Abfassungszeit der Oden Salomos", *OrChr* 68 (1984) 80-90; H.J.W. Drijvers, "Odes of Solomon and Psalm of Mani", *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions Presented to G. Quispel*, ed. R. Van den Broek, M.J. Vermaseren, Leyden 1981, 117-130; Idem, "Solomon as Teacher: Early Syriac Didactic Poetry", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 123-134; M. Franzmann, "Portrait of a Poet: Reflections on 'the Poet' in the Odes of Solomon", *Perspectives on Language and Text. Essays... in Honour of F.I. Andersen*, ed. E.W. Conrad, E.C. Newing, Winona Lake 1987, 315-326; M. Lattke, "Die griechischen Wörter im syrischen Text der Oden Salomos", *Aram* 5 (1993) 285-302.

c) Theology: H.J.W. Drijvers, "The 19th Ode of Solomon: Its Interpretation and Place in Syrian Christianity", *JTS* 31 (1980) 337-355; M. Franzmann, "Strangers from Above: An Investigation into the Motifs of Strangeness in the Odes of Solomon and Some Gnostic Texts", *Muséon* 103 (1990) 27-41; M. Lattke, "Die Messias-Stellen der Oden Salomos", *Anfänge der Theologie*, Göttingen 1991, 429-445; M.-J. Pierre, "La vierge prédicante de la 33<sup>e</sup> Ode de Salomon", *Centre d'études des religions du livre - De la conversion*, ed. J.-C. Aittas, Paris 1997, 255-279; Idem, "Les Odes de Salomon, 'chants de la venue du Seigneur'", *Prologues, Entrer en matière*, ed. J.-D. Dubois, B. Roussel, Paris 1998, 149-164.

### BARDESANES (BARDAISAN)

The fragmentary state of the material referable to Bardesanes - to whom its attribution is often uncertain, due to the difficulty of discerning between what is his and what is ascribable to disciples more or less close to him, whether chronologically or doctrinally - does not allow a precise, unanimous reconstruction of his teaching. What is certain is the importance of his work, which opened up Edessene Syriac to a wider use than that obtained for it by the activity of the translators of Scripture, Jewish or Christian.

A representative of the city aristocracy, and certainly an outstanding figure at the court of Abgar VIII the Great, Bardesanes was a learned intellectual with a multitude of interests, a clear-sighted interpreter of

the "religious philosophy" of the time and at the same time an elegant writer. Recent studies have emphasized the priority in him of astrological interests, in conformity with a well-attested characteristic of the culture – including the "Judaean-Christian" culture – of that region. How the cultivated, curious and versatile Bardesanes came to adhere to Christianity is hard to say. But his teaching seems to attest some clear positions taken by him which may be usefully remembered and may perhaps suggest some answer. Against Marcion, for example, he maintains the goodness of God, the one God; against an "asexual" monotheism, however, he seems to affirm the constitutive fecundity of the Divine, its original "doubleness": God is one, certainly, but is at the same time Father and Mother of life; against Jewish and Christian circles who maintained creation from nothing, Bardesanes insists on the co-presence with God, but beneath him, of fire, light, water, wind/spirit and, at a still lower level, darkness: it was an accident occurring on the intermediate plane of the four original "entities" that produced that state of distressing mixture from which the intervention of God, invoked in a loud voice by the entities themselves, brought the world, in which he then "inserted" a new power, a vital/noetic breath extraneous to them to begin with. Against widely held hypotheses, Bardesanes forcefully affirms the freedom of man, heart of the world, in his divine centre: the all is indeed constrained by a fate that conditions its events; there is indeed in its every entity a nature, which bears down powerfully, but in man there is also freedom – decisive, unshakable and moderating – which raises him beyond nature and fate.

During the time of mixture, with regard to the restoration of the state of original division of the entities – but a restoration that inaugurates a state of indefectible equilibrium –, Bardesanes thus contemplates an "abatement" of the manifold forms, of the divine power, an economy of salvation that delimits distinct spaces and times, in dynamic correlation, at whose centre is humanity and, within that, Christ, teacher and model of truth for the whole. A Christ, moreover, understood in a Docetist way, i.e. as incorporeal and removed from any resurrection of bodies: this is the *exclusion* outlined by the fragments of the Edessene author.

*Editions:* No writings by Bardesanes survive. Certainly attributable to his school is the *Liber legum regionum*, which can be read, edited by F. Nau with Latin version, in *Patrologia Syriaca* 1/2, Paris 1907, 490-658; another edition, with English version, is in H.J.W. Drijvers, *The Book of the Laws of the Countries. Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa*, Assen 1965. An Italian translation of the dialogue, dating from 1921, is now republished, with two further studies of Bardesanes by the author of the version, in G. Levi della Vida, *Pinagora, Bardesane e altri studi siriaci*, ed. R. Contini, Rome 1989, 63-111. The text, translated into Greek, was used by Eusebius of Caesarea, who mentions it, attributing it to Bardesanes himself, in *Ecclesiastical History* IV, 30, 2 (diabolic, in this section of it, to the early 4th century at latest) and cites it more fully in *Præparatio*

*evangelica* VI, 10, 1-48, a work seemingly composed in the second decade of the 4th century. The Greek version of the work was then also used in the so-called "basic text" of the Pseudo-Clementine writings, handed down here in *Recognitions* 9, 19-29, itself drawn up in all likelihood between the 3rd decade of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th (cf. the summing-up of the question of the dating of this work in *Les Reconnaissances du pseudo Clément – Roman chrétien des premiers siècles*, ed. A. Schneider, L. Cirillo, Turnhout 1999, 22-23).

*Studies:* General introduction: H.J.W. Drijvers, "Bardesanes", *TRE* 5 (1979) 206-212.

J. Teixidor, "Bardesane de Syrie", *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques II*, Paris 1994, 54-63; H.J.W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, Assen 1966 (a fundamental, though sharply contested, monograph, including a collection of the materials relating to the author it studies); T. Jansma, *Natuur, lot en vrijheid. Bardesanes, de filosoof der Arameïer en zijn images*, Wageningen 1969; B. Ehlers Aland, "Bardesanes von Edessa – ein syrische Gnostiker. Bemerkungen ans Anlaß des Buches von H.J.W. Drijvers, Bardaisan von Edessa", *ZKG* 81 (1970) 334-351; H.J.W. Drijvers, "Bardaisan von Edessa als repräsentant des syrischen Synkretismus in 2. Jahrhundert n. Ch.", *Synkretismus in syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet*, ed. A. Dietrich, AAWG 96, Göttingen 1975, 109-122 (now in *East of Antioch*, London 1984, XII); B. Aland, "Mani und Bardesanes. Zur Entstehung des manichäischen Systems", *Synkretismus...* cit., 123-143; E. Beck, "Bardaisan und seine Schule bei Ephräm", *Muséon* 91 (1978) 271-333; A. Dible, "Zur Schicksalslehre des Bardesanes", *Kerygma und Logos. Festschrift für C. Andersen*, ed. A.M. Ritter, Göttingen 1979, 123-135; G. Widengren, "Bardesanes von Edessa und der syrisch-mesopotamische Gnostizismus", *The Many and the One: Essays on Religion in the Graeco-Roman World Presented to H. Lüdin Jansen*, ed. P. Borgen, Trondheim 1985, 153-181; H. Kruse, "Die 'mythologische Irrtümer' Bar-Daisans", *OrChr* 71 (1987) 24-52; J. Teixidor, *Bardesane d'Edesse. La première philosophie syriaque*, Paris 1992 (on which cf. the perplexed review by A. De Halleux: *Muséon* 106 [1993] 195-197 and the reservations of H.J.W. Drijvers, *Early Syriac Christianity...* cit., [1996] 162-171); A. Camplani, "Rivisitando Bardesane – Note sulle fonti siriache del bardesanism e sulla sua collocazione storico-religiosa", *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19 (1998) 519-595 (contains a *status quaestionis* and a deeper re-examination of the material on Bardesanes, to be supplemented with a further contribution by Camplani, entitled "Note bardesamitiche", *Miscellanea Marciana* 12 [1997] 11-43).

## MARA

The manuscript that transmits the *Liber legum regionum* also contains a "beautiful" letter (so Y.-M. Duval, *La littérature...* cit., 241, n.1), "of exceptional interest" (F. Millar, *The Roman Near East...* cit., 460), good evidence of the spread of Greek culture, and particularly of "popular" forms of Stoicism, east of the Euphrates, probably around the mid 2nd century (though it has also recently been interpreted as a later fake by a 4th-century Christian author who, for apologetic reasons, disguised himself as a pagan intellectual who celebrated Jesus as an example of philosophical life – a theory shared by Brock, in his outline of Syriac literature, 1997, 18). The text is presented as a *Letter of Mara, son of Serapion*, addressed to his son, also named Serapion.



*Editions:* W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, London 1855, 43-48 (English tr., ibid. 70-76; German tr., with important study: F. Schulthess, "Der Brief des Mara bar Sarapion", *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 51 [1897] 365-391).

*Studies:* General introduction: F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337*, Cambridge (MA)-London 1993, 460-462.

K.E. McVey, "A Fresh Look at the Letter of Mara bar Sarapion to his Son", *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1990, 257-272.

### MELITO THE PHILOSOPHER

The 7th-century Syriac ms. that includes the *Liber legum regionum* and the Letter of Mara also contains a *Discourse of Melito the Philosopher*, addressed to Antoninus Caesar. A. Baumstark, in *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur...* cit., 27, suggested that the work should be considered "an original", not translated from Greek. The unknown author, probably from Hierapolis/Mabbūgh, wrote it between the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 3rd century. The hypothesis of a Syriac work was questioned by Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 156-157, who emphasized the author's scant familiarity with Syrian traditions; but on this, cf. now F. Millar, *The Roman Near East...* cit., 247, who, while lamenting the scant attention given to the work, which makes its reading difficult, observes among other things, in connection with the inaccuracies it contains about the pagan mythology of Hierapolis, that "the fact of having been written in Syriac does not necessarily save Christian analyses of pagan cults in Syria from presenting the same concatenation of confused and incompatible elements" that can be found, for example, in parallel observations by the "Greek" Lucian. Cf. also W.J.H. Drijvers, *Early Syriac Christianity...*, 173, on the cultivated and perfectly bilingual milieu of contemporary urban Syria, to which he ascribes Melito's *Apology* as well as the Letter of Mara mentioned above, and Brock, who in his 1997 outline of Syriac literature, p. 18, inclines towards an original Greek redaction of the text, calling attention to a citation in it of 2 Peter, a work not present in the first Syriac canon of the NT.

*General introduction:* F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337*, Cambridge (MA)-London 1993, 477-478.

*Editions:* W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, London 1855, 22-31.

*Translations – English:* ibidem 41-51.

*Latin:* J.B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, 2, Paris 1855, xxxvii-lvi.

### ACTS OF JUDAS THOMAS

Early Christian literature knows various accounts of the mission, behaviour and actions, the journeys and martyrdom of the apostles,

composed between the 2nd and 3rd centuries, certainly using a basis of early traditions, but fundamentally with the intention of entrusting the propaganda of the Gospel to the marvellous acts of "divine men", witnesses to the efficacy of the power of God, using and reworking the materials and forms of various literary genres then current.

The *Acts of Judas Thomas* (c. 225) find their original place among these writings, with some of which, in the 4th century, they would come to form a unitary collection, perhaps of Manichaean provenance, but destined for a popularity as great as it was controversial. Though of Syrian composition (but probably not from the Edessa area), the Syriac text that now represents them has been subjected to interventions aimed at reworking them in an "orthodox" sense, so that sometimes the Greek version of them attests a form closer to the original. They tell the story of the preaching, miracles and martyrdom of Thomas in India, characterized by the enrolment of the figure of the apostle within an old tradition about him – perhaps predating the redaction of the canonical Gospels – of which they are one of the main witnesses. In accordance with this tradition, Thomas, type and model of the believer, is the "twin" of Jesus, in the end equal to him, one with him, as already suggested by the Gospel ascribed to him, which was certainly present to the redactors of the writing under examination here. It has been pointed out that the recurrence of images linked to the theme of the twin is continued in the *Acts of Thomas*, which incessantly multiply "the analogies between Jesus and his apostle, to the point that the destiny" of the latter "perfectly reproduces that of his lord and teacher", though the text, perhaps mindful of the "canonical" interpretation of Thomas (but perhaps also of the original perspective of its own tradition), contains "a theological intention aimed at emphasizing both distance and identity" between the two, wishing to indicate in this way that their unity "is above all spiritual" (P.-H. Poirier, *Évangile de Thomas...*, 21).

A work whose themes and energetic emphasis made it very acceptable to the Manichaean communities of Syria (if not produced by them), the *Acts* appear as a reworking of various materials, among which particular importance attaches to the so-called *Hymn of the Pearl*, perhaps originally a text of a narrative from Babylonian Syria, whose very language attests a non-Edessene and hence "pre-classical" Syriac. This tells of a king's son sent to the West to recover a precious pearl, there becoming forgetful of the task entrusted to him, until a letter delivered to him from his parents restores him to self-awareness, so that he gains the pearl and brings it back to his country, thus obtaining his own inheritance – themes all reinterpreted as events of the soul and/or, more originally, of the Saviour/saved.

*Editions:* W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and Other Libraries with English Translations and Notes*,

2 voll., London 1871 (text: I, 171-333; English tr.: II, 146-298; anast. ed., Amsterdam 1968); P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum syriace III*, Paris-Leipzig 1892 (text only: I-175; anast. ed., Hildesheim 1968).

*Partial critical editions:* T. Jansma, *A Selection from the Acts of Judas Thomas*, Leyden 1952; P.-H. Poirier, *L'Hymne de la perle des "Actes de Thomas"*, *Introduction, texte, traduction*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1981.

*Translations:* A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, Leyden 1962; H.J.W. Drijvers, "Thomasakten", *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 2, ed. W. Schneemelcher, 5th ed., Tübingen 1989, 289-367; P.H. Poirier, Y. Tissot, "Les Actes de Thomas", *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, 1, ed. F. Bovon, P. Geoltrain, Paris 1998, 1321-1470.

*Studies:* General introduction: S. Mimouni, "Thomas (apôtre)", *DSP* 15 (1997) 708-718.

J.D. Turner, "A New Link in the Syrian Judas Thomas Tradition", *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts in Honour of A. Böhlig*, ed. M. Krause, Leyden 1972, 109-119; R. Kuntzmann, *Le symbolisme des jumeaux au Proche-Orient ancien. Naissance, fonction et évolution d'un symbole*, Paris 1983; H. Kruse, "Das Brautlied der syrischen Thomas-Akten", *OCP* 50 (1984) 291-330; Idem, "Zwei Geist-Epiklese der syrischen Thomasakten", *OrChr* 69 (1985) 33-53; J.M. La Fargue, *Language and Gnosis: The Opening Scenes of the Acts of Thomas*, Philadelphia 1985; D.R. Cartlidge, "Transfigurations of Metamorphosis Traditions in the Acts of John, Thomas and Peter", *Semeia* 38 (1986) 53-66; Y. Tissot, "L'encratisme des Actes de Thomas", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. W. Haase, Part 2, 25.6, Berlin 1988, 4415-4430; S. Abouzayd, "The Acts of Thomas and the Unity of the Dualistic World in the Syrian Orient", *Aram* 1/2 (1989) 217-252; G. Rouwhorst, "La célébration de l'eucharistie selon les Actes de Thomas", *Omnes Circumstantes: Contributions towards a History of the Role of the People in the Liturgy Presented to H. Wegman*, Kampen 1990, 51-77; G.J. Riley, "Thomas Tradition and the Acts of Thomas", *Society of Biblical Literature 1991 Seminar Papers. One Hundred Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting, November 23-26, 1991, Kansas City, Missouri, Atlanta* 1991, 533-542; P.-H. Poirier, "Apousia. Note sur un mot des Actes de Thomas", *Aram* 5 (1993) 427-435; Idem, "Évangile de Thomas, Actes de Thomas, Livre de Thomas. Une tradition et ses transformations", *Apocrypha* 7 (1996) 9-26; F. Siegert, "Analyses rhétoriques et stylistiques portant sur les Actes de Jean et les Actes de Thomas", *Apocrypha* 8 (1997) 231-250.

## II. THE 4TH CENTURY: THE GOLDEN AGE OF "CATHOLIC" CHRISTIANITY IN SYRIA

The fortunes of the Church of Syria, both in the Western, "Roman" part and in the Eastern, Persian part of this large region, were from the first decades of the 4th century firmly enrolled under the banner of the victory of the so-called "Great Church", in the forms of organization and discipline of the individual Churches and of their communion, and also in terms of their confession of faith. This statement, it must be added, does not exclude a relationship, felt as decisive – and in fact revealed as such –, with the Churches of the Greek and Latin West, with which firstly the dioceses of Osroene and Adiabene would have a stronger connection, and then gradually all the regions of Semitic and Iranian Persia.

One contribution to the comparison with the traditions of the "Roman" Churches, themselves engaged in consolidation in this period, was certainly made, from the second half of the 3rd century, by the deportation to Babylonia and Persia of populations from the area of Syria subject to Rome during the victorious campaigns of Shapur I (241-272) against the adverse Empire. Many of the deportees were Christians – laymen, presbyters or bishops – and in the places assigned them they maintained and developed a church life often distinct from that of the communities already present there, though not without stimulus and influence on them. Yet it was the events linked to the claim advanced by the bishops of the capital cities of Sasanid Persia, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, to have their primacy recognized over the whole Church of the East, that led between the second and fourth decades of the 4th century to a crisis whose resolution was in fact referred to the bishops of the West.

The extent of this intervention must not be overrated, however. While the "Roman" bishops of, e.g., Edessa and Nisibis were present at Nicæa and were witnesses and actors in the introduction of "Nicene" themes and problems into their Churches, the situation of the "Persian" bishops, almost wholly absent from that council and very ill-informed about the debate to which it corresponded, was very different. In the late 330s, Aphrahat, the first great author of the "Catholic" Church of the East of whom we possess knowledge and writings, would attest a "credo" still wholly distant, in its terms and preoccupations, from those that had for some time been pronounced and proposed among the Latins and Greeks,

signifying the altogether different sensibility and tradition of his community. Meanwhile, the sometimes very bloody persecutions, which severely tried the Churches of Persia for many decades from the early 340s, threw their hierarchies into disarray for a long time, constraining them to a thoroughly difficult life, with little chance to cultivate distant relationships, from which they would emerge only at the start of the 5th century, in no small part thanks to the intervention of a "Western" bishop who was a delegate of Theodosius II to the Sasanid court.

Between the first decades of the 4th and the first years of the 5th century, at any rate, we see the first vigorous emergence, of which there is ample evidence, of a Syriac literature, quite varied in its expressions and often clearly referable to individual authors or milieus, prevalently, perhaps, but certainly not solely, from the "Roman" area. An "orthodox" literature, as was said before, which often, in the Passions of martyrs, apocrypha and chronicles that it produced especially towards the end of this period, aimed to emphasize and even "invent" "orthodox" origins and traditions for the Churches of which it was an expression; a literature, however, in which there is ample trace of material that is liturgical, exegetical, homiletic and, if it may be said, "archaic", linked to Jewish, gnostic traditions, originally reinterpreted by the Christian communities of the region in the light of their perception of the novelty, the *eschatological* novelty and dignity of life given back to man by Christ – a material, it must be added, in tension with the contexts in which it was inserted and used, contexts that reveal the status of Churches which by now systematically accommodated "secular", "worldly", experiences, contexts that attest the duality, irresolvable within the actual life of believers, of the time of the Church, between presence and imminence of the kingdom. On the other hand, ever greater exposure to the characters and traditions of the Western Churches would involve, particularly at first in the Roman area, an institutional and organizational disciplining and a difficult acculturation into Greek theological debate (where Ephrem, in his criticism of the effrontery and speculative curiosity of the "heresies", would speak in tones not too different from those of Basil – saving only the different capacity to control the philosophical material underlying the discussion). It also involved the adoption and renewal, strong and original, of the monastic experience, in all its complex declension, including the "archaic" traits it fostered and its oft-attested reservations about the salvation-historical significance of the Constantinian turning-point, the presence of a "Christian king" and an "imperial church" in Rome and its territories.

All these themes and problems, obviously, would receive particular attention from the second half of the century, with the gradual reduction and then cessation of the persecutions in Persia, and also in concomitance

with the consolidation in the Roman area, towards the end of that period, of an active work of translation into Syriac of Greek texts: historical, apocryphal, homiletic and monastic.

*Studies:* A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient. A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*. 1, *The Origin of Asceticism. Early Monasticism in Persia*, CSCO 184 / Subs. 14, Louvain 1958; 2, *Early Monasticism in Mesopotamia and Syria*, CSCO 197 / Subs. 17, Louvain 1960 (on the views here expounded cf. the review by A. Adam, now in the volume edited by K.S. Frank, *Askese und Mönchtum in der Alten Kirche*, Darmstadt 1975, 230-254); 3, *A Study of Monasticism in the Near East*, CSCO 500 / Subs. 81, Lovanii 1988; G. Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church", *OCP* 39 (1973) 191-215, 419-444; R. Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church", *NTS* 21 (1974) 59-80; Idem, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, Cambridge 1975 (repr. with corrections, 1977); Idem, "Some Rhetorical Patterns in Early Syriac Literature", *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, ed. R.H. Fisher, Chicago 1977, 109-131; M.-L. Chaumont, *La christianisation de l'empire iranien dès origines aux grandes persecutions du IV siècle*, CSCO 499 / Subs. 80, Lovanii 1988; N. Koltun, *Jewish-Christian Polemics in Fourth-Century Persian Mesopotamia: A Reconstructed Conversation*, Stanford 1993; S.H. Griffith, "Monks, 'Singles', and the 'Sons of the Covenant'. Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology", *Euloghema. Studies in Honour of R. Taft, S.J.*, ed. E. Carr, S. Parenti, A.A. Thiermeyer, E. Velkovska, Rome 1993, 141-160; S. AbouZayd, *Ihdayutha. A Study of the Life of Singleness in the Syrian Orient. From Ignatius of Antioch to Chalcedon 451 A.D.*, Oxford 1993; S.H. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria. The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism", V.L. Wimbush, R. Valantasis, *Asceticism*, New York 1995, 220-245.

#### APHRAHAT (APHRAATES)

The use of the name Aphrahat, Syriac form of the Persian Farhad or Ferhad, to indicate the "Persian sage", author of a unitary *corpus* of 23 *Demonstrations* or *Expositions* which survive entire, appears for the first time only in the middle of the 10th century, in the information-rich lexicon of Bar Bahlul. There is no earlier mention of his name. As George, the learned bishop of the Arabs at Hirta, who died in 724, wrote: "it is impossible to say with certainty who this Persian sage was, i.e. what was his dignity or rank in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, or even what was his name or place of residence". All the same, his work provides various pieces of information about him.

Firstly, it is the product of three distinct periods of composition: the first ten *Expositions* were completed in 337, the next twelve in 344, while the last was brought to an end in August 345, fifth year of the persecution of the Christians "in the land of the East" ordered by the Sasanid ruler Shapur II. Secondly, Aphrahat speaks of himself as a "disciple of the Books", probably a gentile by birth. Furthermore, within the wider Christian community, local and regional, in which he enjoyed sound credit and in whose affairs he intervened authoritatively, he

characterizes himself as a "solitary", a "son of the Covenant", using a terminology that he is among the first to attest, member of an "order" that aimed henceforth to celebrate, free from the distractions of marriage, possessions and work, in service of the Word and in prayer, that heavenly liturgy in which the Kingdom would have its fulfilment. A "solitary" himself, it is to other "solitaries" that he mainly addresses his *Expositions*.

Two further characteristics should be borne in mind to understand the personality, work and times of Aphrahat. However extraneous to the ecclesiastical affairs and theological discussions of the Western Churches (the creed he expounds, for example, shows no trace of the Nicene creed and its hinterland), he nevertheless not only knows about the Constantinian turning-point that has made the Empire of the Romans "Christian", but he even seems to interpret it providentially. Finally, in the second block of the *Expositions* he conducts a close defence of the Christian faith against the objections made against it by a "scribe, learned interpreter of the people" (the people *par excellence*, Israel), in a discussion that reacts, probably, to pressure then being exercised by the synagogue on the Churches, at a time of persecution for them.

*Editions* (with main translations): J. Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*, PS 1-2, Paris 1884-1907 (includes a Latin tr.; French tr.: M.-J. Pierre, *Aphraate le Sage Persan, Les Exposés*, SCH 349 and 359, Paris 1988 and 1989; German tr.: P. Bruns, *Aphraat, Demonstrationes. Unterweisungen*, Fontes Christiani 5/1-2, Freiburg 1991 – French and German translations both contain ample, important, comprehensive introductions to Aphrahat, with rich bibliography).

*Studies*: General introduction: G.G. Blum, "Aphrahat", *TRE* 1 (1977) 625-635; A. Vööbus, "Aphrahat", *RAC* 4 (1986) 497-506.

a) Aphraates and the Scriptures: T. Baarda, *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, 2 voll., Amsterdam 1975; R.J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, Leyden 1983.

b) Aphrahat and Judaism: J. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism*, Leyden 1971; J.G. Snaith, "Aphrahat and the Jews", *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of E.J.J. Rosenthal*, ed. J.A. Hamilton, S.C. Reif, Cambridge 1982, 235-250; S.D. Benin, "Commandments, Covenants and the Jews in Aphrahat, Ephrem and Jacob of Sarug", *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. D. Blumenthal, Chicago 1984, 135-156; N. Koltun Fromm, "Aphrahat and the Rabbis on Noah's Righteousness in Light of the Jewish-Christian Polemic", *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation. A Collection of Essays*, ed. J. Frishman, L. Van Rompay, Lovanii 1997, 57-71.

c) Theology and sacraments in Aphrahat: E.J. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates, the Persian Sage*, Washington (DC) 1945; P. Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen*, Bonn 1990.

d) Aphrahat and the Christian community – *Demonstratio XIV*: J.-M. Fiey, "Notule de littérature syriaque. La démonstration XIV d'Aphraate", *Muséon* 81 (1968) 449-454; G. Nedungatt, "The Authenticity of Aphrahat's Synodal Letter", *OCP* 46 (1980) 62-88; M.-J. Pierre, "Un synode contestataire à l'époque d'Aphraate le Sage Persan", *Centre d'études des religions du livre – La controverse religieuse et ses formes*, ed. A. Le Boulluec, Paris 1995, 243-279.

e) "Sons of the covenant" and "solitaries": cf. the studies cited *supra* in the Introduction to this section, p. 437, and A.J. Van Der Aelst, "À l'origine du monachisme syrien: les 'ihidaye' chez Aphraat", *Fructus Centesimus: Mélanges offerts à G.J.M. Bartelink*, ed. A.A.R. Bastiaensen, A. Hilhorst, C.H. Kneepkens, Dordrecht 1989, 315-324.

f) Aphrahat's writing: R. Murray, "Hellenistic-Jewish Rhetoric in Aphrahat", *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1983, 87-96.

## EPHREM

The one certain date of Ephrem's life is that of his death, which took place on 9 June 373 at Edessa. Here he had arrived from the more easterly Nisibis, soon after the cession of that city, "without inhabitants", to Shapur II by the emperor Jovian in 363 at the conclusion of a war that had opposed Rome to Sasanid Persia.

Ephrem was probably born at Nisibis or thereabouts in about 306. A text datable to the last decades of the 7th century informs us that in Nisibis bishop Jacob, active between c. 303 and 338, had founded a school, perhaps on the model of the schools run by the region's Jewish communities, one of which had operated in the city until about the end of the 3rd century, and had called Ephrem to interpret the Scriptures there. It is certain that Ephrem recalled Jacob as one who had begotten the Nisibene Church and given it the milk of infancy, probably on account of the stronger relationship he had established with the Greek and Latin Churches, sanctioned by his presence at Nicaea; it is also certain that some time later he taught at the school supposedly founded by him, and some of his writings testify to this activity of his. He taught, again, while leading the life of a "solitary", a "son of the Covenant", in the manner of Aphrahat, busily present among the bishops who succeeded each other on the throne of the Nisibene Church, first Babu (338-346), then Vologeses (died 361 or 362), to whom he was particularly close as deacon and also as a mature and authoritative Doctor, and finally Abraham.

Ephrem's concern for the orthodoxy of the Churches of Nisibis and Edessa is a major characteristic of his, attested by the many works, in verse and in prose, devoted by him to confirming the faith of the Christian community, to which he invited particularly the sons and daughters of the Covenant, against the doctrines of Marcionites, Bardesanites, Manichees and Arians, against the persistence of pagan customs, against the Jews, also, by whose exegetical traditions his meditation was nevertheless deeply influenced. For Christians he advocated a strict behaviour, capable of driving back the temptation of wealth and corresponding to the way of deprivation by which the Son had witnessed to the Father.

His active care for the needs of the Church and the city is also evident in the collaboration he lent, during the famine that raged at Edessa between 372 and 373, the year of his death, to the organization of relief for the needy, the distribution of food and the burial of the dead.

*General introduction:* E. Beck, "Éphrem le Syrien (saint)", *DSP* 4 (1960) 788-800; Idem, "Ephraem Syrus", *RAC* 5 (1962) 520-531; S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem*, Rome 1985 (and Kalamazoo 1992, with added indexes); A. De Halleux, "Saint Éphrem le Syrien", *RTL* 14 (1983) 328-355.

*Bibliographical repertoires* (in chronological order): M.R. Roncaglia, "Essai de bibliographie sur Saint Éphrem le Syrien", *PdO* 4 (1973) 343-370; K. Samir, "Compléments de bibliographie éphrémiennne", *PdO* 4 (1973) 371-391; S. Brock, *Syriac Studies*, I, 31, 415-417 (23-25); II, 41, 320-327 (30-37); III, 38, 305-308 (17-20); IV, 40, 236-241; V, 39, 273-279.

*Editions:* On the problem of Ephrem's writings, authentic and spurious, cf. firstly the *status quaestionis* expounded by Beck in "Éphrem le Syrien (saint)", 790-791, and then the more recent contributions of J. Melki, "Saint Éphrem le Syrien, un bilan de l'édition critique", *PdO* 11 (1983) 3-88; and S. Brock, "A Brief Guide to the Main Editions and Translations of the Works of St Ephrem", *The Harp* 3 (1990) 7-29. Particularly important for the poetic works are the essays of A. De Halleux, "Une clé pour les hymnes d'Éphrem dans le ms. Sinaï syr. 10", *Muséon* 85 (1972) 171-199, and "La transmission des hymnes d'Éphrem dans le ms. Sinaï syr. 10, f° 165v-178r", *Symposium Syriacum* 1972, Rome 1974, 21-63; cf. also S. Brock, "The Transmission of Ephrem's 'madrashe' in the Syriac Liturgical Tradition", *SP* 33, 1997, 490-505.

We will say nothing here about Greek, Latin or other versions of Ephrem, on which cf. D. Hemmerdinger-Iliadou, "Éphrem grec et latin", *DSP* 4 (1960) 800-819; and J. Kirchmeyer, "Autres versions d'Éphrem", *ibid.* 819-822; on the Greek Ephrem cf. also M. Geerard, *CPG* 2, Turnhout 1974, 366-468.

a) Comprehensive or partial editions between the 18th and early 20th centuries: J.S. Assemani, *S. Patris nostri Ephraem syri opera omnia quae extant... syriace-latine*, vol. 1-3, Romae 1737-1743; J.J. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi syri, Rabulae episcopi edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta*, Oxford 1865 (the edition contains among other things, on pp. 21-58, a letter of Ephrem to Hypatius, now translated and commented by E. Beck, "Ephraems Brief an Hypatios übersetzt und erklärt", *OrChr* 58 [1974] 76-120; on pp. 113-131 an *Epistula ad montanos* – now edited by Beck in *Sermones* IV, CSCO 334 / Syr. 148 [cf. *infra*, c)] – considered authentic by A. Vööbus, *A Letter of Ephrem to the Mountaineers*, Pinneberg 1947, but rejected by Beck and recently attributed to Isaac of Antioch by E.G. Matthews, "On Solitaries", Ephrem or Isaac?", *Muséon* 103 [1990] 91-110; P. Zingerle, *Monumenta syriaca*, I, Innsbruck 1869 (limited to pp. 4-12); T.H.J. Lamy, *S. Ephraemi syri hymni et sermones*, 4 voll., Malines 1882-1902.

b) Recent critical editions (with information on their main translations and studies closely related to them):

b.1) Prose writings:

b.1.1) Exegetical works: *S. Ephraem syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii*, ed. R.M. Tonneau, CSCO 152 / Syr. 71 (Latin tr., CSCO 153 / Syr. 72), Louvain 1955 (repr., 1965); Éphrem le Syrien, *Commentaire de l'évangile concordant. Version arménienne*, ed. L. Leloir, CSCO 137 / Arm. 1, Louvain 1953 (Latin tr., CSCO 145 / Arm. 2, Louvain 1954); Saint Éphrem, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant. Texte*

*syriaque (Manuscript Chester Beatty, 709)*, ed. L. Leloir, Dublin 1963 (with Latin tr.; French tr.: Éphrem de Nisibe, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant ou Diatessaron*, ed. L. Leloir, SC 121, Paris 1966); Saint Éphrem, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant. Texte syriaque (Manuscript Chester Beatty, 709). Folios additionnels*, ed. L. Leloir, Leuven-Paris 1990 (with Latin tr.; English tr.: C. McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron. An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac Ms 709 with Introduction and Notes*, Journal of Semitic Studies. Supplement, 2, Oxford 1993); *Srboyn Ep'remi Asuroy Meknut' iwn Gorcoc' Arak'eloc' (Commentarius in Acta Apostolorum [Armenian version])*, ed. N. Akinian, Vienna 1921 (English tr.: F.C. Conybeare, "The Commentary of Ephrem on Acts", *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. Jackson, K. Lake, I. 31, London 1926, 373-453); *Srboyn Ep'remi Matenagrut' iwnk' III (Commentarii in Epistolas Pauli [Armenian version])*, Venice 1836 (Latin tr.: S. Ephraemi Syri Commentarii in Epistolas D. Pauli a patribus Mekhitaristis in latinum sermonem translati, Venice 1893).

b.1.2) Polemical works: *St Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan*, ed. C.W. Mitchell, A.A. Bevan, F.C. Burkitt, 2 voll., London 1912-1921 (with English tr.; a German tr. with commentary on the section contained in 2, 1-49, can now be read in E. Beck, "Ephräm Rede gegen eine philosophische Schrift des Bardaisan übersetzt und erklärt", *OrChr* 60 [1976] 24-68).

b.2) Rhythmical prose writings: "Ephrem's Letter to Publius", ed. S.P. Brock, *Muséon* 89 (1976) 261-305 (with English tr.; on the letter cf. Brock's study, "An Unpublished Letter of St. Ephrem", *PdO* [1973] 317-323); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermo de Domino Nostro*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 270 / Syr. 116 (German tr., CSCO 271 / Syr. 117), Louvain 1966.

b.3) Verse writings:

b.3.1) *Madrashe* (Hymns): *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 154 / Syr. 73 (German tr., CSCO 155 / Syr. 74), Louvain 1955 (on this text cf. E. Beck's study, *Die Theologie des hl. Ephraem in seinen Hymnen über den Glauben*, Rome 1949); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena*, ed. E. Beck, I, CSCO 218 / Syr. 92 (German tr., CSCO 219 / Syr. 93), Louvain 1961; 2, CSCO 240 / Syr. 102 (German tr., CSCO 241 / Syr. 103), Louvain 1963 (French tr. in P. Féghali, C. Navarre, *Saint Ephrem, les chants de Nisibe*, Paris 1989); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen Contra Haereses*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 169 / Syr. 76 (German tr., CSCO 170 / Syr. 77), Louvain 1957; *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Virginitate*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 223 / Syr. 94 (German tr., CSCO 224 / Syr. 95), Louvain 1962 (English tr. in K.E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns*, New York 1989); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ecclesia*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 198 / Syr. 84 (German tr., CSCO 199 / Syr. 85), Louvain 1960; *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 186 / Syr. 82 (German tr., CSCO 187 / Syr. 83), Louvain 1959 (English tr. in K.E. McVey, *Ephrem... cit.*); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen (De azymis, De crucifixione, De resurrectione)*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 248 / Syr. 108 (German tr., CSCO 249 / Syr. 109), Louvain 1964 (French tr. and commentary in G.A.M. Rouwhorst, *Les hymnes pascales d'Éphrem de Nisibe*, 2 voll., Leyden 1989); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, ed. E. Beck, CSCO 174 / Syr. 78 (German tr., CSCO 175 / Syr. 79), Louvain 1957 (the hymns on Paradise are translated into French: Éphrem de Nisibe, *Hymnes sur le Paradis*, tr. R. Lavenant – introduction and notes by F. Graffin, Sch 137, Paris 1968; into English: S. Brock, *St Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise*, New York 1990; the hymns against Julian are translated into English in K.E. McVey, *Ephrem... cit.*); *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ieiunio*, ed. E. Beck,



CSCO 246 / Syr. 106 (German tr., CSCO 247 / Syr. 107), Louvain 1964; *Hymnes de s. Ephrem conservées en version arménienne*, ed. L. Mariès, C. Mercier, PO 30/1, Paris 1961 (with Latin tr.).

b.3.2) *Mēnūrē* (Discourses or sermons): *Des heiligen Ephraem Sermones de Fide*, ed. E. Beek, CSCO 270 / Syr. 116 (Latin tr., CSCO 271 / Syr. 117), Louvain 1961 (on this text cf. E. Beek's study, *Ephraem's Reden über den Glauben, ihr theologischer Lehrgehalt und ihr geschichtlicher Rahmen*, Rome 1953); *Éphrem de Nisibe, Memre sur Nicomédie*, ed. C. Renoux, PO 37/2-3, Paris 1975 (Armenian version; Syriac fragments; French tr.).

c) Dubious or mainly spurious works: *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Sermones I-IV*, ed. E. Beek, CSCO 305, 311, 320, 334 / Syr. 130, 134, 138, 148 (German tr., CSCO 306, 312, 321, 335 / Syr. 131, 135, 139, 149), Louvain 1970-1973; *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen auf Abraham Kidunaya und Julianos Saba*, ed. E. Beek, CSCO 322 / Syr. 140 (German tr., CSCO 323 / Syr. 141), Louvain 1972; *Ephraem Syrus, Sermones in Hebdomadam Sanctam*, ed. E. Beek, CSCO 412 / Syr. 181 (German tr., CSCO 413 / Syr. 182), Louvain 1979.

*Studies:* a) Ephrem and the Church of his time: S.H. Griffith, "Ephraem, the Deacon of Edessa, and the Church of the Empire", *Diakonia. Studies in Honour of Robert T. Meyer*, ed. T. Halton, J.P. Williman, Washington (DC) 1986, 22-52; Idem, "Images of Ephraem: the Syrian Holy Man and His Church", *Traditio* 45 (1989/1990) 7-33. b) Ephrem's symbolic thought: R. Murray, "The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology", *PdO* 6/7 (1975/1976) 1-20; T. Bou Mansour, *La pensée symbolique de Saint Ephrem le Syrien*, Kaslik-Liban 1988; A. Palmer, "A Lyre Without a Voice". The Poetics and the Politics of Ephrem the Syrian", *Aram* 5 (1993) 371-399.

c) Ephremian exegesis: L. Leloir, *Doctrines et méthodes de Saint Ephrem d'après son commentaire de l'Evangile concordant*, CSCO 220 / Subs. 18, Louvain 1961; N. Sed, "Les hymnes sur le Paradis de saint Ephrem et les traditions juives", *Muséon* 81 (1986) 455-501; S. Hidal, *Interpretatio Syriaca. Die Kommentare des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers zu Genesis und Exodus mit besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer auslegungsgeschichtlichen Stellung*, Lund 1974; T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian. With Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition*, Lund 1978; D. Bundy, "Revising the Diatessaron Against the Manichaean: Ephrem of Syria on John 1, 4", *Aram* 5 (1993) 65-74; A. De Halleux, "L'annonciation à Marie dans le commentaire syriaque du Diatessaron", *Aram* 5 (1993) 131-145; Idem, "L'épisode de l'annonce à Zacharie dans le commentaire syriaque du Diatessaron", *Muséon* 106 (1993) 255-265; Idem, *Les citations de Mt 2, 1-18, dans le commentaire syriaque du Diatessaron*, Annales du Département des Lettres Arabes, 6B (1991-1992), Beirut 1996; L. Van Rompay, "The Christian Syriae Tradition of Interpretation", *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of its Interpretation*, 1, Göttingen 1996, 612-641 (paragraph 3, 622-628, is on Ephrem; a good restatement of the problem, with up-to-date bibliography).

d) Ephrem's theology: N. El-Khoury, *Die Interpretation der Welt bei Ephraem dem Syrer*, Mainz 1976; J. Martikainen, *Das Böse und der Teufel in der Theologie Ephraems des Syrers*, Abo 1978; Idem, *Gerechtigkeit und Güte Gottes. Studien zur Theologie Ephraems des Syrers und des Philoxenos von Mabbug*, Göttingen 1980; E. Beek, *Ephraem's Trinitätslehre im Bild von Sonne/Feuer, Licht und Wärme*, CSCO 425 / Subs. 62, Louvain 1981; T. Bou Mansour, "La liberté chez Saint Ephrem", *PdO* 11 (1983) 89-156; 12 (1984/1985) 331-346; S.D. Benin, *Commandments, Covenants and the Jews* (1984) (cited *supra* in Aphrahat, *STUDIES* [b], p. 438).

e) Ephrem, "sons of the covenant", and "solitaries": E. Beek, "Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums", *Antonius Magnus Eremita (356-1956)*, ed. B. Steidle, Rome 1956, 254-267; Idem, "Asketentum und Mönchtum bei Ephrem", *Il monachismo orientale*, Rome 1958, 341-362 (French tr.: "Ascétisme et monachisme chez saint Ephrem", *OrSy* 3 [1958] 273-298); A. Vööbus, "Le reflet du monachisme primitif dans les écrits d'Ephrem le Syrien", *OrSy* 4 (1959) 299-306; cf. also the most recent and comprehensive studies cited in the INTRODUCTION to the chapter and in Aphrahat, *STUDIES* (c), p. 439.

f) Liturgy and sacraments in Ephrem: G. Saber, *La théologie baptismale de saint Ephrem. Essai de théologie historique*, Kaslik-Liban 1974; E. Beek, *Dorea und Charis. Die Taufe. Zwei Beiträge zur Theologie Ephraems des Syrers*, CSCO 457 / Subs. 72, Louvain 1984; V. Van Vossel, *L'onction baptismale chez saint Ephrem*, Baghdad 1984; P. Yousif, *L'Eucharistie chez saint Ephrem de Nisibe*, Rome 1984.

### CYRILLONAS

An author who is part of the Ephremian tradition, Cyrillonas (c. 400) has been identified by some critics with "the presbyter 'Absamyā, son of the sister of the blessed Ephrem", who had composed "odes and sermons on the incursion of the Huns into the empire of the Romans", as the *Chronicle of Edessa* recites. To Cyrillonas, indeed, we owe a *Hymn on the locusts, on the castigation, on the invasion of the Huns*, which, by the events it refers to, can be placed in the years 395-396 when there was an incursion of the Huns inside the borders of the Empire, affecting even Syria, while the same region suffered from violent earthquakes, drought and famine.

An Edessene, Cyrillonas was certainly one of the best poets of the Syriac tradition. To him we owe six works, including hymns, rhythmical homilies and songs, devoted not just to the invasion of the Huns and a meditation on the meanings of wheat and its growth, but also to biblical themes such as the Washing of Feet, the Last Supper, Easter and Zaccchaeus. These texts are full of allusions to Scripture and show, among other things, a habitual use of the separate Gospels, thus confirming, as the date of their composition, the decades spanning the late 4th and early 5th centuries.

*Editions and studies:* G. Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 27 (1873) 566-598; Idem, "Berechtigungen zur Cyrillonas", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 35 (1881) 531-532 (Italian tr.: C. Vona, *I Carmi di Cirillona. Studio introduttivo - Traduzione - Commento*, Rome-Paris-Tournai-New York 1963; French tr.: Cyrillonas, *L'agneau véritable*, ed. D. Cerbelaud, Chevotogne 1984).

### LIBER GRADUUM (LATE 4TH - EARLY 5TH CENTURY)

Published by M. Kmosko in 1926 with a lengthy introduction aiming to place it within the Messalian phenomenon, the *Liber gradum*, as it is

customarily designated, using the Latin version of the title that sometimes accompanies it in the manuscript tradition, has gradually attracted the attention of scholars by the variety and complexity of the themes and traditions present in it, which link it clearly to the Christian culture of Syria between the 4th and 5th centuries, and also by the singularity of the synthesis it presents. A composite book, whose exegetical-theological and paracletic material is in its present form distributed among 30 distinct "discourses", this text is seen by some as eminently representative of that meditation on the Spirit and its fruits in the life of believers which runs through all the thought of the Syriac Churches. It contains a close discussion on the status of the first Adam, called to lead an angelic life on earth, his mind in heaven, intent on the contemplation/glorification of God; on his distraction from the Creator through giving his attention to the beauty and fecundity of the sensible world, coinciding with the loss of the Spirit and the impossibility, from that moment on, of leading a life conforming in everything to the "perfect will of God", but still – indeed, only now – in ceaseless confrontation with his own creatural nature, susceptible and capable of justice, in the difficult discernment of good from evil; on his progressive degradation, moving towards situations of ever more irreversible iniquity; on the work of God, who making use of some just men and prophets of Israel, with punishments and violence obliged men to remember Him, even in the time of enmity, until in Jesus, the incarnate Son, who in humiliation and death fulfilled His perfect will, He restored peace, renewed the attitudes of *in principio*, attitudes of charity, not of justice, in self-emptying and abandonment of his links with the world, so that man may once more, even here, be simply prayerful and merciful, accepting and blessing everything after the example of Christ who came for sinners and, innocent, gave himself for them.

While these are some of the leading motifs of the work, whose exegesis of Scriptural passages shows itself surprisingly sober in its attitude to symbolic interpretations and its use of Jewish interpretative traditions (unlike Aphrahat or Ephrem, though very close to them in many of the ideas it insists on), we must add that the circles that produced it and used it attest a sometimes profound discomfort, due to an incomprehension and intolerance towards them on the part of those sectors of the visible Church, the one Church which they themselves confessed, in which, according to their terminology, justice prevailed and men laboured to understand and seek perfection and its works, considered too available to the "far off", especially in times of heresy and persecution.

*Edition:* *Liber graduum*, ed. M. Kmosko, PS 1/3, Parisii 1926 (with Latin tr. and full introduction).

*Studies:* General introduction: A. Guillaumont, "Liber Graduum", *DSP* 9 (1976) 749-754.

A. Guillaumont, "Situation et signification du 'Liber Graduum' dans la spiritualité syriaque", *Symposium Syriacum* 1972, Rome 1974, 311-322; R.A. Kitchen, "The Gattung of the Liber Graduum. Implications for a Sociology of Asceticism", *IV Symposium Syriacum* 1984, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 173-182; A. Böhlig, "Zur Rhetorik im Liber Graduum", *ibid.* 297-305; A. Kowalski, *Perfezione e giustizia di Adamo nel Liber graduum*, Rome 1989 (a fundamental study, with ample bibliography); C. Stewart, "Working the Earth of the Heart". *The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts and Language to AD 431*, Oxford 1991; L. Wickham, "Teaching about God and Christ in the Liber Graduum", *Logos. Festschrift für L. Abramowski*, ed. H.C. Brennecke, E.L. Grasmück, C. Marksches, Berlin-New York 1993, 486-498; Idem, "The 'Liber Graduum' Revisited", *VI Symposium Syriacum* 1992, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1994, 177-187; D. Juhl, *Die Askese im Liber Graduum und bei Aphrahat. Eine vergleichende Studie zur früh-syrischen Frömmigkeit*, Wiesbaden 1996; P. Butiolo, "Confessare Dio in perfetta spogliazione. La via del discernimento dei comandamenti nel Liber Graduum", *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 19 (1998) 631-651 (with up-to-date bibliography).

### DOCTRINE OF ADDAI

The existing text of the *Doctrine of Addai* is the outcome of the long process of growth of an original narrative nucleus linked to the brief correspondence supposedly exchanged between Abgar, king of Edessa, and Jesus, on the eve of his arrest. Apart from Christ's immediate gift to the king of a portrait of himself, the supposed fruit of this exchange was the sending of the apostle Addai to the court of the capital city of Osroene. Here he healed the king and preached the Gospel in front of him, his dignitaries and the whole city, bringing about its conversion and thus founding the Edessene Church. In this account is also inserted a reworking of the legend, datable to the second half of the 4th century, of the rediscovery of the cross by Constantine's mother Helena, which suggests a first discovery of it by the wife of the emperor Claudius, converted to Christianity after seeing the miracles performed by Peter at Rome.

Given that the account of Abgar's conversion is cited by Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Ecclesiastical History*, "it is probable that in the early 4th century there was a Christian legend written in Syriac that enabled the Edessenes to boast of having been evangelized by an apostolic envoy" (A. Desreumaux, *Histoire du roi Abgar...*, 16). This legend, established in the course of the 3rd century and bearing traces of clear anti-Doctetist and anti-Manichean concerns, corresponds well to the need for a "non-polemical" rewriting of the history of Edessene Christianity by a now victorious "orthodox" community (A. Desreumaux, *Abgar...* cit., 227). The material relating to the *inventio crucis* would have been added to this nucleus in the first decades of the 5th century, perhaps by Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, with the precise intention not just of further

emphasizing "the status of Edessa as a Christian city", but also of "establishing a link between Edessa and the imperial house and promoting the Monophysite and anti-Jewish ideas" very much present in this layer of the text (H.J.W. Drijvers, *The Protonike Legend...*, 522-523).

*Editions:* while awaiting the critical edition edited by A. Desreumaux for the *Series Apocryphorum* of the *Corpus Christianorum*, published by Brepols, see the editions of W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries, from the Year after Our Lord's Ascension to the Beginning of the Fourth Century*, London-Edinburgh 1864 (London mss.); and G. Phillips, *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, Now First Edited in a Complete Form in the Original Syriac with an English Translation and Notes*, London 1876 (St Petersburg ms.).

*Translations:* A. Desreumaux, *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus*, Turnhout 1993 (as well as the translation of the complete Syriac text of the *Doctrine of Addai*, with introduction and bibliography, this also contains that of a Greek version of it, by A. Palmer, and an Ethiopic version, by R. Beylot).

*Studies:* H.J.W. Drijvers, "Addai und Mani. Christentum und Manichäismus im dritten Jahrhundert in Syrien", *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1983, 171-185; A. Desreumaux, "La doctrine d'Addai, l'image du Christ et les Monophysites", *Nicée II 787-1987*, Paris 1987, 73-80; Idem, "La doctrine d'Addai: le chroniqueur et ses documents", *Apocrypha* 1 (1990) 249-267; Idem, "Abgar, le roi converti à nouveau - Les chrétiens d'Édesse selon la 'Doctrine d'Addai'", *Centre d'études des religions du livre - De la conversion*, ed. J.-C. Attias, Paris 1997, 217-227; H.J.W. Drijvers, "The Protonike Legend and the 'Doctrina Addai'", *SP* 33, 1997, 517-523.

### ACTS OF THE MARTYRS

The study of the Syriac Acts of the martyrs is rather complex and hard to recapitulate in a few lines. Suffice to state here, firstly, that we must distinguish clearly between the Western ecclesial sphere and the Eastern or Persian one. First of all, chronologically: in Roman Syria, the persecutions ceased precisely in those first decades of the 4th century that saw their harshest onset among the Sasanids. Secondly, as to quantity and quality of writings, given that Western texts are few, and some of these (the *Acts of Sharbel*, the *Acts of Bishop Barsamya*), while claiming to be contemporary witnesses to the events they narrate, referable to 104, the time of Trajan, are clearly late works from the early 5th century, produced by those same circles that had devised the *Doctrine of Addai* as a "tendentious propaganda" aimed at accrediting the antiquity and orthodoxy of the Christian community present in the capital of Osrhoene (Brock, *Eusebius and Syriac Christianity*, cit., 228). Much more credible, also from Edessa, are the data provided by the *Acts of Shmona and Gurya*, martyred apparently in 297, and that of the deacon Habib, killed probably in 309 - names known to Ephrem and mentioned in the list of martyrs that can be read in a codex written at Edessa in November 411.

Rather more important, both in quantity and as a historical source, is the corresponding literature from the Eastern sector. Here, subjection to a power that aimed to represent an ethnically restricted religious tradition, whose first guardians, jealous of its integrity and position, were tenaciously opposed to communities, whether Manichaean or Christian, that were increasingly extending their presence and influence in those same Persian circles, explains in part the difficulties and even the persecutions to which the Churches were exposed, especially after the Sasanid kings found themselves fighting against a Roman world become Christian, with which they feared the Churches were colluding.

It is thus worth taking a good look at some examples of this extensive literature which, from the 4th century, held up the Acts of the martyrs to the memories of the faithful. The first persecution suffered by the Christians of Persia seems to date from the second part of the reign of Vahram II (276-293), in a context dominated by anti-Manichaean repression, in which probably the Christians were indirectly and marginally involved. From this time comes especially a *Testimony of the Blessed Candida*, a "Roman" taken prisoner who became a wife of the king. Although written probably in the last decades of the 4th century or perhaps even the early 5th, it rests on older materials of great interest (on the problems posed by the dating of the text cf. S. Brock, *A Martyr at the Sasanid Court...*, 171-172; M.-L. Chaumont, *La christianisation...*, 110, suggests an earlier date, proposing it as the work of Milēs of Ray, bishop of Susa, the great accuser of Papa bar Aggai, the disputed bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, in which case the work would predate the great persecution of Shapur II, in which Milēs himself died).

The greatest persecution, however, occurred in the 4th century: for some 40 years, from 339/340, the Churches repeatedly suffered the violence of the king of kings (the date of the start of the persecution, in its bloody phase, is disputed; cf. the summary of M.-L. Chaumont, *op. cit.*, 160 [with note 3], though this, while recapitulating and confirming the views of Nöldeke, Peeters and others on a start to the killings in 340, omits any mention of Devos, *Notes...*, 246-248; cf. also, for a dating from 344, M.-J. Pierre, *Un synode contestataire...*). The texts of the martyrs of these years were in large part collected probably by Marutha of Maipherqat at the beginning of the 5th century (the attribution was strongly contested, but the examination of the Armenian version, attributable to Abraham the Confessor and datable around the middle of the 5th century, "argues in favour of the real existence of a collection by Marutha, made around 410, in a period of peace, starting from several texts earlier than itself" [M.-J. van Esbroeck, *Abraham le confesseur...*, 179], an attribution reinforced by the later Armenian version of the *Acts of Marutha*, dating from the 9th-10th century, which expressly mentions

the redaction by the bishop of "discourses composed well and with wisdom" concerning the martyrs [L. Ter-Petrosian, *L'attribution...*, 130]. One of the major witnesses to the collection is the *Martyrdom of the Blessed Simon bar Sabba'e*, Papa's successor on the throne of Seleucia-Ctesiphon; this is the basis of the information devoted by Sozomen to this catholicos of the Church of Persia, and it differs from a second, more recent *Martyrdom* of the same Simon that appears as an alternative to the first in some examples of the collection.

While Marutha, probably, collected the Acts of the 4th-century martyrs in the first years of the 5th century, we should place "towards the end of the first quarter of the 5th century" a series of four *Passions* relating to the persecutions of the last years of the reign of Iazdkart I (399-420) and the very first years of that of Vahram V (420-438), composed by Abgar, a monk at a monastery six miles from Seleucia, whose superior he may have been and which is repeatedly mentioned in the *Passions*, an author whose authoritativeness is "first-rate" and whose texts are of excellent literary quality and rare sobriety (P. Devos, *Abgar...*, 321-322 and 326-328). They also demonstrate a recurrent trait in similar writings produced by the Church of Persia: "the concern to show the Christians as subjects wholly loyal to the king, though they elaim their obligations of conscience towards God" (ibid. 323).

This literature cannot be followed further here, but it did not cease, because of the persecutions that repeatedly, though sporadically, tested the Churches of the East in the Sasanid era. An important work by Babai the Great on George, "priest, monk, confessor and crowned martyr", crucified in 615, will be remembered in its proper place. Here we should mention at least the *History of Karkha of Bet Sloh and the Martyrs in it*, which, though presented as a history of that city of Bet Garmai from the time of its foundation, is in fact mainly an account of the persecutions suffered by the Christian community there at the time of Shapur II and then, especially (the section relating to these events occupies about two thirds of the text), of Iazdkart II (428-447), in 445. Written towards the end of the 6th century, the *History* is the work of an anonymous author whom some would identify with Bar Sahde, author of an *Ecclesiastical History* of which we have only a few fragments included in the *Chronicle of Seert* – surviving only in an Arabic version – and in the *Chronography* of Elias of Nisibis, author too of a polemical work against Zoroaster and, it is suggested, of the lost Syriac original of the *Passion of Saint Shirin* († 559), also from Karkha of Bet Sloh, a city of whose Church Bar Sahde may have been bishop (J.-M. Fiey, *Vers la réhabilitation...*, 1964, 219-221; Devos, *La jeune martyre perse...*, 13).

A case apart, finally, is that of the two letters written in 519 by the Monophysite bishop Symeon of Bet Arsham, the "Persian disputer", to

his namesake, hegumen of Gabbula, on the then recent (November 518) martyrdom of some Christians of Yemen, in particular of the city of Najran, put to death by the Judaizing Himyarite king Du-Nuwas. Symeon wrote the letters on the basis of information received from quite credible witnesses, firstly at Hira, capital of the pro-Persian Lakhmid Arabs, and later at Gbita, in the Golan, from the encampment of the pro-Byzantine Ghassanid Arabs. We also owe him an important letter on the spread of Nestorianism in Persia, whose final redaction seems to be later than 518, date of the death of the emperor Anastasius, there mentioned as blessed, but which was perhaps originally composed around 505/506 (cf. "Symeon Beth Arsamensis Epistola de Barsauma episcopo Nisibeno, deque haeresi Nestorianorum", G.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-Vaticana I – De scriptoribus Syris orthodoxis*, Rome 1719, 345-358; information on Symeon can be read in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* by John of Amida, bishop of Ephesus, on whom cf. *supra*, in the Introduction, *Syriac Ecclesiastical Chronicles and Histories* 5).

*Repertory of texts and editions*: BHO.

*Editions*: S.E. Assemani, *Acta sanctorum martyrum*, 2 voll., Rome 1748 (with Latin tr.; anast. ed., Farnborough 1970); W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, London 1864 (with English tr.; anast. ed., Amsterdam 1967); I. Guidi, "La lettera di Simeone vescovo di Beth-Arsham sopra i martiri omeriti", *Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, s. 3, *Memorie della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 7 (1881) 471-501; P. Bedjan, *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, 7 voll., Paris 1890-1897; anast. ed., Hildesheim 1968; I.E. II Rahmani, *Acta sanctorum confessorum Guriae et Schamoniae, adjecta latina versione*, Rome 1899; M. Kmosko, *S. Simeon bar Sabba'e*, PS 1/2, 659-1055, Paris 1907 (with Latin tr.); I. Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran. New Documents*, Brussels 1971 (with English tr. of Symeon of Bet Arsham's second letter on the Himyarite martyrs and an extensive study); P. Devos, "L'abrégé syriaque BHO 104 sur les martyrs himyarites", *AB* 90 (1972) 335-359 (with French tr.); S. Brock, "A Martyr at the Sasanid Court under Vahram II: Candida", *AB* 96 (1978) 167-181 (comprehensive study of the edition of the text and of an English version of it).

*Studies*: G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, Leipzig 1880, anast. repr., Liechtenstein 1966; P. Peeters, *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, 2 voll., Brussels 1951; J.M. Fiey, "Vers la réhabilitation de l' 'Histoire de Karka d'bet Sloh' ", *AB* 82 (1964) 189-222; P. Devos, "Abgar, hagiographe perse méconnue (début du V<sup>e</sup> siècle)", *AB* 83 (1965) 303-328; Idem, "Notes d'hagiographie perse", *AB* 84 (1966) 229-248; Idem, "Sozomène et les Actes syriaques de s. Syméon bar Sabba'e", *AB* 84 (1966) 443-456; Idem, "Les martyrs persans à travers leurs Actes syriaques", *Problemi attuali di scienza e di cultura – Atti del convegno sul tema: La Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, Rome 1966, 213-225; G. Wiesner, *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II*, Göttingen 1967; M.-J. van Esbroeck, "Abraham le confesseur (V<sup>e</sup> s.) traducteur des Passions des martyrs perses – À propos d'un livre récent", *AB* 95 (1977) 169-179; L. Ter-Petrosian, "L'attribution du recueil des Passions des martyrs perses à Maroutha de Maypherqat", *AB* 97 (1979) 129-130; P. Devos, "La jeune martyre perse sainte Shirin († 559)", *AB* 112 (1994) 5-31.

### III. FROM THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 5TH TO THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 6TH CENTURY: THE PERIOD OF HELLENIZATION AND DIVISION OF THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

So far, we have often insisted on the impossibility of radically separating the Syrian area from the influence of Hellenism, present in the region since the time of Alexander's campaigns, though in ever-changing relationships and balances with the other cultural themes active in the region. If, then, the period covered by this section is characterized as "period of Hellenization" *par excellence*, we are obliged to indicate the specific sense of this. Three facts will help us understand the reasons for it.

First, in 410 Bishop Marutha of Maipherqat, imperial delegate at the Sasanid court, promoted a synod of the Persian Churches aimed at settling the tensions between Christian community and kingdom and giving form and stable organization to the Churches themselves, in full acceptance of the Nicene faith and canons. The process begun then at Seleucia-Ctesiphon met with no immediate reception, but despite difficulties it was irreversible, bringing to a conclusion the conformation of the Eastern Churches to the Latin and Greek Churches of the West. Second, probably between 415 and 420, a young Syrian from Persia, Narsai, arrived at the great school of Edessa in Roman territory to complete his studies. Here he was put in contact with the ideas and texts of Antiochene authors, taken up as guides to the exegesis of Scripture and the understanding of dogma by the circles gathered around the "Rabban" of the school, Qiiore († 436/437), whose theological options, however, were tenaciously opposed by the then bishop of the Edessene Church, Rabbula (412-435). Narsai would recall thus his first contact with the books of Theodore of Mopsuestia, recently translated: "The readers of the Books meditated in ignorance until they had read his books: then they understood. We should give the name 'doctor of doctors' to the one, able in intellect, without whom there would have been no doctor capable of giving a good teaching. Through the treasure of his writings all have been enriched; through his commentaries they have acquired the power to interpret".

But the spread of Antiochene doctrines, sign of a more general penetration of "Greek" letters into the Syrian world, did not happen

without meeting resistance, as we have already pointed out. Reserving theological resistance, already operating in Rabbula's actions, for the following pages, we will recall here that an author of those same opening decades of the century, a monk and scholar, John the Solitary, denounced both "the heresy of two sons", introduced into Syria by Antiochene texts, and that taste for "the elegant word" which, in his view, was leading many to read and imitate Greek exegeses of Scripture, declining to uphold that "power of the Word" which the less refined and subtle Semitic understanding and languages seemed better able to receive. Yet, we must add, John himself is a witness to Greek interpretations and to debates in which recourse to Greek knowledge was not at all marginal.

Here we have three different proofs of "Hellenization", the controversial but irreversible new "Hellenization" of the Churches of Syria, both Western and Eastern, increasingly sharing the concerns, problems and forms of expression that characterized the Greek and Latin Churches. And it was this sharing that, in the 5th century, especially from the second half of it, produced a division that would rend ever more deeply – in a way wholly parallel to what was occurring especially in the Greek world – urban and rural communities, bishops and monks, intellectuals and illiterate or semi-literate crowds throughout Syria. "Spew of the Dragon", Antiochene Christology had a singular bitterness for men who, like Rabbula, would find in Cyril the champion of the "simple" faith of the Fathers. The direction of the Edessene school, no less than the episcopal ministry or the leadership of monasteries everywhere, would become objects of struggles, confrontations, schisms – even if their reasons were not always understood, or by everyone.

Yet it would be wrong not to perceive the tones of the tradition of Ephrem or "Addai" present in many voices of the different warring factions, from Narsai to Philoxenus, to give two small examples. They are in part the tones found and cultivated in anti-Arian polemic, or those of the challenge to certain interpretations of the exercise of the ministry in a too worldly Church, interpretations insufficiently true to the meekness and humility of the true pastor, the sons of the "new world"; more generally they are the tones of the spiritual, eschatological dignity of Christian living, delivered from all creatural hierarchy and understanding, fixed as it is on the crucified one, the unique, most real, lovable revealer and proclaimer of divine silence and *arcana*, which persist even in the incarnation of the Son. Diphysites and Monophysites in Syria in fact seem to contend not so much by formulating ever more complex and subtle articulations of Christ's ontological status, as by claiming for their own different and opposing formulae a testimonial potency, in no way traditional, towards a mystery of God and man (and, let us add, of their union), which they fear will be ruined once



they turn aside, as indeed the Fathers teach, from the worship introduced by faith in the Risen One – because the proclamation of the resurrection is the true fire of Christianity.

All these, it must finally be said, are tones that, coming from Syria, would reverberate in the Greek and Latin literatures, through writings that convey them at great length, such as, e.g., the Pseudo-Macarian writings.

*Studies:* Many of the studies mentioned at the end of the presentation of the previous section, as well as sections of those cited in the General Introduction to this chapter, deal with themes and problems of the 5th century and may be useful to an understanding of it; others, concerning individual authors, but capable of providing a more comprehensive picture of the events of the time in which they worked, will be mentioned in the different paragraphs that follow, to which the reader is referred. It remains to point out some monographs or essays such as: A. Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les grecs et chez les syriens*, Paris 1962 (an unsurpassed work on Origenism in Syria from the 5th to 8th centuries); G.G. Blum, *Rabbula von Edessa, der Christ, der Bischof, der Theologe*, CSCO 300 / Subs. 34, Louvain 1969; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries*, Cambridge 1972; R.C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies. Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug*, Oxford 1976; P. Canivet, *Le monachisme syrien selon Théodoret de Cyr*, Paris 1977; J. Gribomont, "Le symbole de foi de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)", *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus*, ed. R.H. Fisher, Chicago 1977, 283-294; A. De Halleux, "Le symbole des évêques perses au synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)" *Erkenntnis und Meinungen II*, ed. G. Wiessner, Wiesbaden 1978, 160-190; S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century*, CSCO 426 / Subs. 63, Louvain 1981; S. Broek, "L'Église de l'Orient dans l'Empire sassanide jusqu'au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle et son absence aux conciles de l'Empire romain", *Istina* 40 (1995) 25-43.

### BALAI

To Balai, *chorepiskopos* in the Church of Beroca (Aleppo), a man of "Roman" Syria who lived in the first half of the 5th century, are attributed a number of hymns or *madrashe*. Among those certainly authentic, the one best known and most studied was written on the occasion of the consecration of the church of Qenneshrin, a town south-east of Beroca, the first surviving hymn devoted to such a theme. Of no interest as evidence of the Christian art and architecture of the time, containing no description of the building whose construction it celebrates, the text of the hymn is rich in Ephremian echoes, in particular of the *Hymns on the Nativity*, and is apparently indebted to some motifs present in the very different panegyric devoted by Eusebius to the church of Tyre, included in his *Ecclesiastical History*, of which a Syriac version circulated. But Balai profoundly renews these materials, partly on the model of prophetic texts, such as those of Ezekiel, on the "new temple", read by him in

reference to the church/building. The traditional theme of God's presence in the "church of the heart", which Balai mentions and for which R. Murray, *Symbols of Church...*, 271-274, suggests a parallel especially with the *Liber graduum*, is in fact aimed in an original way, and perhaps with some hesitation (K.E. McVey, *The Sagitha...*, 337), at introducing a "saecralization" of the space. He thus inaugurated the connection, destined for a great future, between God's presence in the church/building, because of the Eucharistic liturgy celebrated there, and incarnation.

*Editions:* Balai, "Hymns (In dedicationem Ecclesiae – 5 Laudes in Acaeiū)", bishop of Beroca [Aleppo; † 432], *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae, Balae Aliorumque Opera Selecta*, ed. J.J. Overbeek, Oxford 1865, 251-269.

*Studies:* K.V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's*, Lipsia 1902; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, Cambridge 1975 (repr. with corrections, 1977), 227-228, 271-274; F. Graffin, "Poème de Mar Babai pour la dédicace de l'église de Qenneshrin", *PdO* 10 (1981/1982) 103-121; K.E. McVey, "The Sagitha on the Church of Edessa in the Context of Other Early Greek and Syriac Hymns for the Consecration of Church Buildings", *Aram* 5 (1993) 329-370.

### ISAAC OF ANTIOCH

A letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite shows how by the end of the 7th century the poetic work put under Isaac's name posed problems of attribution: in it Jacob distinguishes texts by three different authors who lived between the late 4th century and the first decades of the 6th.

Some 200 *mēmre* are referred to one or the other Isaac, only some 70 of which are published. In most cases it is impossible to determine their real author with exactness, due to the absence of an overall critical edition and full, reliable studies. The earliest Isaac, a native of Amida, is presented in the manuscript tradition as a disciple of Ephrem or, with more likelihood, of a Zenobius who certainly grew up at Ephrem's school. During a journey to Rome, he would have been a spectator of the games of 404, about which he wrote, and of the capture of the city in 410. Also attributed to him is a discourse on Constantinople, which he would have visited on his return journey.

A second and more famous Isaac, active at Antioch, is known in particular for a long text on an episode of Monophysite propaganda in that city, concerning a parrot which the Monophysites had taught the formula of the *Trisagion* including the "Theopaschite" addition: "Immortal God, crucified for us", whose use is attested at the time of the patriarch Peter the Fuller († 488).

Information about two other "Isaacs" is scantier: one, an Edessene, became a Chalcedonian during the episcopate of Aselepius (522-525),

who, as one chronicle tells, "had persecuted the Eastern monks and whoever did not accept the council of Chalcedon"; the last, a solitary, was presumably the author of the more clearly ascetic texts.

*Editions:* G. Bickell, *Sancti Isaaci Antiocheni, doctoris syrorum, opera omnia*, 2 voll., Gießen 1873-1877; P. Bedjan, *Homiliae sancti Isaaci syri Antiocheni*, Paris-Leipzig 1903.

*Studies:* General introduction: F. Graffin, "Isaac d' Isaac d' Antioche", *DSp* 7 (1971) 2010-2011.

S. Kazan, "Isaac of Antioch's Homily Against the Jews", *OrChr* 45 (1961) 30-53; 46 (1962) 87-98; 47 (1963) 89-97; 49 (1965) 57-78; P. Feghali, "Isaac d' Antioche, poème sur l'Incarnation du Verbe", *PdO* 10 (1981/1982) 79-102; Idem, "Isaac d' Antioche, un hymne sur l'Incarnation", *PdO* 11 (1983) 201-222; S. Brock, "The Published Verse Homilies of Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai. Index of Incipits", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32 (1987) 279-313; A. C. Klugkist, "Die beiden Homilien des Isaak von Antiocheia über die Eroberung von Bet Hur durch die Araber", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H. J. W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G. J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 237-256; E. G. Mathews, "On Solitaries", Ephrem or Isaac?", *Muséon* 103 (1990) 91-110; M.-J. van Esbroeck, "The Memra on the Parrot by Isaac of Antioch", *JTS* 47 (1996) 464-476; P. Bruns, "Isaac (von Antiochien)", *RAC* (1998) 931-945; G. Greatrex, "Isaac of Antioch and the Sack of Beth Hur", *Muséon* 111 (1998) 287-291.

#### JOHN THE SOLITARY

Many are the problems posed by a coherent corpus of monastic writings, attributed in the mss. to one John the Solitary, publication of which began in the 1930s. While since then "interest in this spiritual author has not ceased to grow", to this day "the mystery that surrounds his person" has not been cleared up; indeed, while most scholars agree in identifying him with a John of Apamea, mentioned by Babai early in the 7th century while citing a letter of his, it must be said that "the latter's identity remains subject to divergent opinions: was he a 6th-century Syrian gnostic, an 8th-century Mesopotamian Messalian, a 5th-century orthodox, or indeed two or three of these persons together?" (A. De Halleux, *La christologie...*, 5).

A more careful study of the Christological vocabulary of at least part of the published writings has enabled us to date his activity to the first decades of the 5th century, thus distinguishing him from a second John of Apamea, known through Philoxenus' polemic against him and other representatives of a "radical Origenism" in early 6th-century Syria. Indeed his meditation on Christ bears visible traces of the teaching of Ephrem, well attested in the milieu of the school of Edessa in the early 5th century, while reacting, in a way not unlike, e.g., Rabbula, against a "heresy of two Sons" which can be traced back to the teachings of the Antiochene Doctors, whose authority was increasing at Edessa at precisely that time.

Monk and spokesman of a "learned asceticism", nourished by the insights of the Greek schools, particularly the Alexandrian, John nevertheless reacted vigorously against a "Hellenization" of the Syriac-speaking Churches, which he considered dangerous and which he characterized as an exaltation of fine speech and dialectical ability and an insidious theological "rationalism".

His monastic teaching insists strongly on the expectation of the new world, which demands, in the perfect, the complete putting-off of this world, the complete "emptying" of it, in accordance with Jesus' *kenosis*. Hope is a central theme of John's meditations. He would also hand down to later generations two further elements, destined to become nodal in the literature of Syrian monasticism: the division of the solitary's itinerary into three successive moments, put under the headings of corporeity (external discipline), psychicity (discipline of thoughts) and spirituality; and the incipient distinction between purity and limpidity, to connote respectively the order of the demeanour of justice (which corresponds to the first two moments of the previous series) and that of perfection, spiritual fulfilment, to which we have access only in single instants, by anticipation, and which will become actual and effective in the Kingdom.

*Editions:* Johannes von Lycopolis, *Ein Dialog über die Seele und die Affekte des Menschen*, ed. S. Dederling, Uppsala 1936 (French tr. by I. Hausherr: *Jean le Solitaire* [Pseudo-Jean de Lycopolis], *Dialogue sur l'âme et les passions des hommes*, Rome 1939); *Briefe von Johannes dem Einsiedler mit kritischem Apparat, Einleitung und Übersetzung*, ed. L. G. Rignell, Lund 1941 (contains three letters; there is a German tr. of the first two, while the third is just summarized; a partial French version is in I. Hausherr, "Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé", cited *infra*, pp. 205-208 of the 1969 edition); *Drei Traktate von Johannes dem Einsiedler (Johannes von Apamea)*, ed. L. G. Rignell, Lund 1960 (with German tr.); Johannes von Apamea, *Sechsis Gespräche mit Thomasios, Der Briefwechsel zwischen Thomasios und Johannes und Drei an Thomasios gerichtete Abhandlungen*, ed. W. Strothmann, Berlin-New York 1972 (with German tr.; on the work, which includes a long introductory study, under the title of *Johannes von Apamea*, cf. T. Jansma's review, "Neue Schriften des Johannes von Apamea. Bemerkungen zu einer Edition", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 31 [1974] 42-52; it contains six dialogues of Thomasios with John; a letter of John to Thomasios; one of Thomasios to John with a reply, which constitutes the first of three treatises subsequently issued – a French tr. of this material is in Jean d'Apamea, *Dialogues et Traités*, ed. R. Lavenant, SC 311, Paris 1984); S. Brock, "John the Solitary, On Prayer", *JTS* 30 (1979) 84-101 (with English tr.; the text is re-edited, from a different ms., in P. Bettolo, "Sulla Pregeliera; Filosseno o Giovanni?", *Muséon* 94 [1981] 75-89 – with Italian tr.); "John the Solitary, *Kephalaia*", J.Y. Çiçek, *Martyanuta d-abahata quddise d'idta*, St. Ephrem's Monastery (Holland) 1985, 99-101; "John the Solitary, *Letter to Hesychius*", S. Brock, *Malpanuta d-abahata suryaye d'al slota*, Monastery of St. Ephrem (Holland) 1988, 30-44 (English tr. in S. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, Kalamazoo [MI] 1989, 81-98); *Kohlet-Kommentar des Johannes von Apamea*, ed. W. Strothmann, Wiesbaden 1988; M. Nin, "Memra de Juan el Solitario", *Studia*

*Monastica* 37 (1995) 19-39 (with Spanish tr.; this is a treatise, numbered by Strothmann among John's authentic ones [*Johannes von Apamea*, 61], *On the economies of God: why the good are afflicted and the wicked and impious prosper in this age*); Idem, "Giovanni il Solitario: due dossologie cristologiche", *Mysterium Christi – Symbolgegenwart und theologische Bedeutung. Festschrift für B. Studer*, Rome 1995, 205-218 (with Italian tr.).

*Studies*: I. Hausherr, "Un grand auteur spirituel retrouvé: Jean d'Apamée", *OCP* 14 (1948) 3-42 (now in *Études de spiritualité orientale*, Rome 1969, 181-216); P. Harb, "Doctrines spirituelles de Jean le Solitaire (Jean d'Apamée)", *PdO* 2 (1971) 225-260; R. Lavenant, "Le problème de Jean d'Apamée", *OCP* 46 (1980) 367-390; A. De Halleux, "La christologie de Jean le Solitaire", *Muséon* 94 (1981) 5-36; Idem, "Le milieu historique de Jean le Solitaire", *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1983, 299-305; J. Martikainen, "Johannes von Apamea und die Entwicklung der syrischen Theologie", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 257-263.

### NARSAI

Narsai was acclaimed as "harp of the Spirit", for his many well-composed writings, and indeed his work is central for the definition of the theology of the Church of Persia. Born in a village in the region of Ma'alta, at the foot of the mountains of Kurdistan, in the north of Iraq, where from the age of seven to 16, in a period disturbed by persecutions, he zealously frequented the school near the church. After a brief stay in a monastery at Bet Zabdai at the invitation of his uncle, who was hegumen there, he went to the "Roman" Edessa to study at the famous school of that city. At that time, between the second and third decades of the 5th century, the bishop there was Rabbula, a fervent Cyrillian († 435), but the school was run by Qiore († 436/437), who followed the Antiochene teachings of Theodore, whose writings were translated at that time through his initiative. Narsai's encounter with the exegesis and theology of the bishop and doctor of Mopsuestia was decisive for him, and he continued the work of his teachers aimed at integrating these insights into more properly local traditions. The episcopate of Ibas († 457) saw his growing success, culminating in his assumption of the direction of the school, probably from 451, amid ceaseless controversies against the "Monophysite" tendency, which had a strong presence in the teaching body, the clergy and, more generally, the Church of the city. Subsequent years saw the latter "party" prevail, marking a growing isolation for Narsai and the circles close to him, to the point of provoking his flight from Edessa, seemingly in 471. He then went to nearby Nisibis, over the border, where the "Antiochene" bishop, Barsauma, persuaded him to stay and open a new school as an alternative to that of Edessa, which he did. The last decades of the century thus saw a clearly Diphysite Christology prevail in the whole Church of Persia, strongly upheld by

Nisibene circles close to the bishop and the school. Narsai directed the school with growing success, despite periods of tension with Barsauma, especially due to some traits of the latter's ecclesiastical policy, aimed at upholding a married clergy, in opposition to the ascetic tendencies of Narsai and the tradition with which he was connected.

The more or less "Chalcedonian" tenor of the ideas and formulae of Narsai's Christology has often been discussed. The first thing to be observed is that it should be set within the Persian Doctor's overall understanding of the divine economy, aimed at restoring and fulfilling, in and from the second Adam, the Creator's initial design: to raise all creation, visible and invisible – recapitulated in the dual nature of man: one not ontologically, but through the friendship by which body and soul mutually grow, fitting themselves to fulfil the one will of their Lord – to the understanding and praise of divine charity, manifestation of the inaccessible God. This voluntary unity, somehow stronger and more perfect than nature's own unity, is the unity of God the Word with the assumed man: they are one, but their unity does not make of the two a new subject. The word of the one is the word of the other; the action of the one is the action of the other, but the very singular unity of God and man that they manifest, and to which they open up mankind and all creation, is in no way a mixture of the two nor a cancellation of the one in favour of the other – both situations that would compromise the effectiveness of the union. A. De Halleux, in a recent essay ("Nestorius – Histoire et Doctrine", *Irénikon* 66 [1993] 38-51 and 163-177), has fixed the limits of the "Nestorian" heresy of Nestorius himself: Narsai, more prudent than the later Nestorius in his ideas, should, perhaps all the more, be seen in the difficulty, both theoretical and practical, of reaching a satisfactory theological formulation of Christological dogma, in the sensibility, in the polemics, in the opposing interests, ecclesiastical and political, of the times he lived in.

*Editions*: A. Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina primo edita*, 2 voll., Mosul 1905 (major edition, contains 47 homilies, of the 81 attested by the manuscript collections; 14 of the 47 homilies are translated into modern languages: v. the list in F.G. McLeod (ed.), *Narsai's Metrical Homilies* [cited *in extenso infra*], 8-9, nn. 11-17; on the manuscript tradition of the homilies cf. W.F. Macomber, "The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai", *OCP* 39 [1973] 275-306); F. Martin, "Homélie de Narsès sur les trois Docteurs nestoriens", *Journal Asiatique* 14 (1899) 446-492, and 15 (1900) 469-525 (text and French tr.; on this work cf. now K. McVey, "The Memra of Narsai on the Three Nestorian Doctors as an Example of Forensic Rhetoric", *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1983, 87-96); *Homélie de Narsai sur la création*, ed. P. Gignoux, PO 34/3-4, Paris 1968 (homilies 49, 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65 of Mingana's list, with French tr.); *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension*, ed. F.G. McLeod, PO 40/1, Paris 1979 (with English tr.; unpublished homilies); Narsai, *Cinq homélie sur les paraboles évangéliques*, ed. E.P. Siman, Paris 1984

(homilies 27, 33, 47, 48 and 53 of Mingana's list, with French tr.); J. Frishman, *The Ways and Means of the Divine Economy. An Edition, Translation and Study of Six Biblical Homilies by Narsai*, Dissertation, Leyden 1992.

*Studies*: N. Sed, "Notes sur l'homélie 34 de Narsai", *OrSyr* 10 (1965) 511-524; T. Jansma, "Études sur la pensée de Narsai", *OrSyr* 11 (1966) 147-168, 265-290, 393-429; F. McLeod, *The Soteriology of Narsai*, Rome 1968; T. Jansma, "Narsai and Ephraem. Some Observations on Narsai's Homilies on Creation and Ephraem's Hymns of Faith", *PdO* (1970) 49-68; Idem, "Narsai's Homilies on Creation: Remarks on a Recent Edition", *Muséon* 83 (1970) 209-236; I. Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, Rome 1974-1975; F. McLeod, "Man as the Image of God: Its Meaning and Theological Significance in Narsai", *ThS* 42 (1981) 458-468; J. Frishman, "Narsai's Homily for the Palm Festival – Against the Jews", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 217-229; Idem, "Type and Reality in the Exegetical Homilies of Mar Narsai", *SP* 20, 1989, 169-178; Idem, "The Style and Composition of Narsai's Homily 76 'On the Translation of Enoch and Elijah'", *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1990, 285-297; M.A. Kappes, "The Voice of Many Waters: The Baptismal Homilies of Narsai of Nisibis", *SP* 33, 1997, 534-547.

### PHILOXENUS OF MABBŪGH

Born in the second third of the 5th century in the Persian province of Bet Garmai, Xenaias, as he was called before Hellenizing his name during his time in the monasteries of Western Syria, was educated at the school of Edessa in years when the Antiochene and Diphysite tradition inspired by Theodore's teaching still prevailed there. Soon, however, he reacted against the Christological ideas of the school, which he accused of a shameless desire to define the manner of the theandric constitution of the incarnate Word. He thus returned to the concerns that had characterized the traditionalist positions of the episcopate of Rabbula, sharpened on the Alexandrian texts of Cyril and Athanasius, which the latter had already begun to translate. Certainly adverse to the radical Monophysite position of a Eutyches, realizing its Docetist outcome and the risk of introducing change and passion into God, Philoxenus yet held that the affirmation of two natures in Christ resolved into a blasphemy against God, limiting Him to becoming a mere part of a composite, and a negation of human salvation itself, given the permanent extraneity of humanity to the divine. Only the Word's becoming "unique and new", its becoming "impassible", free, not essentially subject to corruption and death, can open up to creation a possibility that exceeds it. At the heart of Philoxenus' meditation is the paradox enunciated by the "Theopaschite" form of the *Trisagion*, then recently introduced into the liturgy: "Thou holy God; holy strong; holy immortal, crucified for us, have mercy on us". Decisive Scriptural evidence (Jn 1, 14: "the Word became flesh"; Gal 4, 4: "born [Gk γενόμενον] of a woman, born

under the law"; Gal 3, 13: "having become a curse") and evidence of Christian faith and piety (the Nicene Creed, which insists on the *for us* of the Son's *kenosis*; devotion to Mary *Theotokos*, mother of God) unanimously confirm this irrenounceable and in the end unintelligible confession of the incarnate Word, which alone respects both God's greatness and the integrity of his creature. Outside it there is no Christian novelty, insists Philoxenus, no new proximity of the creature to the Creator, but only, at most, a restatement of the faith of Israel, a faith, moreover, that cuts off the most theologically original elements of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Sinai, the God in exile with his people.

For this faith in the incarnate Word the bishop of Mabbūgh would fight, first as a monk, from c. 470, then, from 16 August 485, as bishop of the metropolitan see of Euphratesia, Mabbūgh, working tirelessly all over Western Syria, at Antioch, in Constantinople itself. After a long struggle against Flavian, patriarch of Antioch, culminating in his deposition, Philoxenus was responsible for the designation of Severus as his successor in November 512. After this, through a policy of tolerance, he sought to gain the agreement of the bishops to the new religious policy of the patriarchate.

Yet the resistance of many and the accession of Justin I to the imperial throne in 518 were to compromise and finally overturn this patient work of persuasion. Philoxenus, having refused to deny his faith, was exiled to Gangra and then to Philippopolis in Thraee where, old and ill, overcome by the harshness of his reclusion, he died on 10 December 523.

*Editions* (works arranged in order of their discussion in A. De Halleux, *Philoxène...* [cited *infra*, STUDIES], pp. 117-308):

a) Exegetical writings: Philoxenus of Mabbūgh, *Fragments of the Commentary on Matthew and Luke*, ed. J.W. Watt, CSCO 392 / Syr. 171 (English tr., CSCO 393 / Syr. 172), Louvain 1978; *The "Matthew-Luke Commentary" of Philoxenus*, ed. D.J. Fox, Missoula 1979 (on these two editions cf. A. De Halleux, "Le commentaire de Philoxène sur Matthieu et Luc: deux éditions récentes", *Muséon* 93 [1980] 5-35); Philoxène de Mabbog, *Commentaire du Prologue johannique*, ed. A. De Halleux, CSCO 380 / Syr. 175 (French tr., CSCO 381 / Syr. 166), Louvain 1977.

b) Dogmatic writings:

b.1) Letters: *Three Letters of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbōg (485-519)*, ed. A. Vasechalde, Rome 1902 (with English tr.; the dogmatic letter to the monks, the first letter to the monks of Bet Gogal); I. Guidi, *La lettera di Filosseno ai monaci di Tell 'Addā*, Atti della Regia Accademia dei Lincei, Cl. di sc. Morali, III 12, Rome 1884 (with analytical summary in Italian); "The Rules of Philoxenus" (fragment of a letter to the monks of Amid), A. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism*, Stockholm 1960, 51-54 (with introduction and English tr.); A. De Halleux, "La deuxième lettre de Philoxène aux monastères de Beit Gaug'al", *Muséon* 96 (1983) 5-79 (with French tr.); Idem, "Nouveaux textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabbog. I: Lettre aux moines de Palestine; Lettre liminaire au synodicon d'Ephèse", *Muséon* 75 (1962) 31-62, and "II: Lettre aux moines

orthodoxes d'Orient", *Muséon* 76 (1963) 5-26 (in both cases with French tr.); J. Lebon, "Textes inédits de Philoxène de Mabboug", *Muséon* 43 (1930) 17-84 and 149-220 (with Latin tr.); Philoxène de Mabboug, *Lettre aux moines de Senoun*, ed. A. De Halleux, CSCO 231 / Syr. 98 (French tr., CSCO 232 / Syr. 99), Louvain 1963.

b.2) Treatises: *Sancti Philoxeni episcopi Mabbugensis dissertationes decem de uno et sancta Trinitate incorporato et passo*, I-II, ed. M. Brière, PO 15/4, Paris 1927 (with Latin tr.); III-V, VI-VIII, IX-X, Appendices, ed. M. Brière (†), F. Graffin, PO 38/3 (with Latin tr.), Paris 1977; PO 39/4, 40/2, 41/1 (with French tr.), Paris 1979, 1980, 1982; *Philoxeni Mabbugensis tractatus tres de Trinitate et incarnatione*, ed. A. Vaschalde, CSCO 9 / Syr. 9 (Latin tr., CSCO 10 / Syr. 10), Paris 1907.

c) Ascetical writings:

c.1) Letters: Philoxène de Mabboug, *La Lettre à Patricius*, ed. R. Lavenant, PO 30/5, Paris 1963 (with French tr.); "Letter of Mar Xenaïas of Mabûg to Abraham and Orestes, Presbyters of Edessa, Concerning Stephen Bar Sudaili the Edessene", edition with English tr. in A.L. Frothingham, *Stephen Bar Sudaili the Syrian Mystic and the Book of Hierotheos*, Leyden 1886, 28-48 (on this letter cf. T. Jansma's study, "Philoxenus' Letter to Abraham and Orestes Concerning Stephen Bar Sudaili", *Muséon* 87 [1974] 79-86); G. Olinder, *A Letter of Philoxenus of Mabbug Sent to a Novice*, Gothenbourg 1941 (with English tr.; there is a short recension of the letter, of which a French version is in M. Albert, "Lettre inédite de Philoxène de Mabboug à l'un de ses disciples", *OrSyr* 6 [1961] 243-254).

c.2) Treatises: A. Thanghe, "Memra de Philoxène de Mabboug sur l'inhabitation du Saint-Esprit", *Muséon* 73 (1960) 39-71 (with French tr.); *The Discourses of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbogh, A.D. 485-519*, ed. E.A.W. Budge, 2 voll. (vol. 2 has an English tr. of the text; it also contains some further brief texts of Philoxenus, on which cf. A. De Halleux, *Philoxène...* cit., 173, 175, 179, 183, 185, 186, 249), London 1893-1894 (French tr.: Philoxène de Mabboug, *Homélies*, ed. E. Lemoine, SCh 44, Paris 1956).

*Translations* (the texts that follow are published only in a modern-language translation): M. Albert, "Une lettre inédite de Philoxène de Mabboug à un Juif converti engagé dans la vie parfaite", *OrSyr* 6 (1961) 41-50; F. Graffin, "Une lettre inédite de Philoxène de Mabboug à un avocat, devenu moine, tenté par Satan", *OrSyr* 5 (1960) 183-196.

*Studies*: General introduction: A. De Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabboug, sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie*, Louvain 1963 (the major monograph on Philoxenus, it is unsurpassed).

E. Beck, "Philoxenus und Ephraem", *OrChr* 46 (1962) 61-76; L. Abramowski, "Ps-Nestorius und Philoxenus von Mabbug", *ZKG* 77 (1966) 122-125; P. Harb, "L'attitude de Philoxène de Mabboug à l'égard de la spiritualité 'savante' d'Évagre le Pontique", *Mémorial Mgr G. Khouri-Sarkis (1898-1968)*, ed. F. Graffin, Louvain 1969, 135-156; Idem, "Le rôle exercé par Philoxène de Mabboug sur l'évolution de la morale dans l'église syrienne", *PdO* 1 (1970) 27-48; Idem, "Les origines de la doctrine de 'la hashushuta' (Apatheia) chez Philoxène de Mabboug", *PdO* 5 (1974) 227-241; L. Abramowski, "Die Schrift Gregors des Lehrers 'Ad Theopompum' und Philoxenus von Mabbug", *ZKG* 27 (1978) 273-290; A. De Halleux, "La philoxénienne du symbole", *Symposium Syriacum 1976*, Rome 1978, 295-315; Idem, "Monophysitismus und Spiritualität nach dem Johanneskommentar des Philoxenus von Mabbug", *Theologie und Philosophie* 53 (1978) 353-366; J.W. Watt, "Philoxenus and the Old Syriac version of Evagrius' Centuries", *OrChr* 64 (1980) 65-81; A. Grillmeier, "Die Taufe Christi und die Taufe der Christen. Zur Tauftheologie des Philoxenus von

Mabbug und ihre Bedeutung für die christliche Spiritualität", *Fides sacramenti, Sacramentum Fidei: Studies in honour of P. Smulders*, Assen 1981, 137-175; J. Martikainen, *Gerechtigkeit und Güte Gottes. Studien zur Theologie von Ephraem dem Syrer und Philoxenos von Mabbug*, Göttingen 1980; B. Aland, "Monophysitismus und Schriftauslegung. Der Kommentar zum Maitäus- und Lukasevangelium des Philoxenus von Mabbug", *Studien zur Ostkirchlichen Spiritualität: F. von Lilienfeld zum 65. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 1982, 142-166; A. De Halleux, "Le Mamlêla de 'Habbib' contre Akseñyā. Aspects textuels d'une polémique christologique dans l'Église syriaque de la première génération post-chalcédonienne", *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Pr. A. Van Roey*, ed. G. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, L. Van Rompay, Leuven 1985, 67-82; G. Lardreau, *Discours philosophique et discours spirituel. Autour de la philosophie spirituelle de Philoxène de Mabboug*, Paris 1985; R.G. Jenkins, *The Old Testament Quotations of Philoxenus of Mabbug*, CSCO 514 / Subs. 84, Louvain 1989; S. Peter Cowe, "Philoxenus of Mabbug and the Synod of Manazkert", *Aram* 5 (1993) 115-129.

### JACOB OF SARUG

Born in 449 in a small town on the bank of the Euphrates, in the district of Sarug in Osrhoene, Jacob was studying at Edessa towards the end of the 460s, when the conflict between the opposing tendencies, Monophysite and Diphysite, was at its height (it was in 471 that Narsai fled the city). There matured in him a profound anti-Nestorian conviction, which led him not so much to polemic as to the custody of a simple apostolic faith, rejecting any adventurous speculation. The Church is called to rejoice always in the Lord and, mindful of this, cannot endure the darkening or bitterness of conflict. But this does not mean it must not always be outstretched to silently contemplate its Lord, who disorients it and kindles it to amazement now with His greatness, now with His littleness – greatness and littleness of one and the same, the incarnate Word who, by obliging man to confess both His humanity and His divinity, instructs him and introduces him to the knowledge of the Father, to a fulfilment consistent with His perfect will.

Jacob's tone and conduct were thus those of a pastor, anxious to point out God's "humble" way to his community, using images and considerations deeply rooted in Ephrem's legacy to the Churches of Syria. And indeed, returning to the district of Sarug aged about 20, Jacob became, at a date of which all we can say for sure is that it was before 502/503, a presbyter at Haura and as *periodeutes* spent much time visiting the faithful who lived in the villages of the region. Perhaps it was his pacific tones, little inclined to clear and insistent Christological formulations, so different from those of, e.g., Philoxenus and hence unsatisfactory to more radical Monophysite circles, that for many years kept him from greater ecclesiastical responsibilities, despite the great fame he acquired by his poetic activity. Only in summer 518, it seems,



was he consecrated bishop of Batna (or Sarug) by Severus and the bishop of Mabbūgh himself, shortly before the patriarch was obliged to leave Antioch to escape the arrest ordered by Justin (29 September 518). On the other hand, neither then nor later does Jacob seem to have been disturbed on account of his Christological convictions, even in years which saw a profound modification of the region's ecclesiastical order – though its progress and pressure were not uniform – and although he seems to have continued, discreetly, to support the Monophysite movement. An old man, he died in his see on 29 November 521.

*Editions:* P. Bedjan, *Homiliae selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*, 5 voll., Paris-Leipzig 1905-1910 (there are many translations of individual "homilies", especially in English; for the years after 1960 see the notices in S. Brock's *Syriac Studies*, under "Jacob of Serugh"); Iacobus Sarugensis, *Epistulae quotquot supersunt*, ed. G. Olinder, CSCO 110 / Syr. 57, Paris 1937 (anast. ed., Louvain 1965; French translations of *Ép.* 14, 15, 16, 17 and 32 are in J.-P. Paulin-Martin, "Lettres de Jacques de Saroug aux moines du couvent de Mar Bassus et à Paul d'Édesse", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 30 [1876] 217-275; *Ép.* 5 in M. Albert, "Lettre sur la foi aux bienheureux d'Arzoun", *OrSyr* 12 [1967] 491-504; *Ép.* 6 in Idem, "Lettre de Jacques de Saroug au prêtre Jean", *Mémorial Mgr G. Khouri-Sarkis*, Louvain 1969, 115-120; *Ép.* 11 in Idem, "Une lettre spirituelle de Jacques de Saroug, évêque monophysite des V<sup>e</sup> et VI<sup>e</sup> siècles", *PdO* 3 [1972] 65-75; *Ép.* 2 in J. Obeld, "Deuxième épître de Jacques de Saroug sur la foi", *PdO* 12 [1984/1985] 187-199; a letter of Jacob to Stephen bar Sudaili, with English version, in A.L. Frothingham, *Stephen Bar Sudaili the Syrian Mystic and the Book of Hierotheos*, Leyden 1886, 10-27; finally see P. Krüger's study, "Le caractère monophysite de la troisième lettre de Jacques de Saroug", *OrSyr* 6 [1961] 301-308, and P. Albert, "La Lettre 19 de Jacques de Saroug", *SP* 173, Oxford 1982, 1351-1358; P. Montet, "Deux homélies inédites de Jacques de Saroug", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* 26 (1944-1946) 1-36 (with French tr.); Jacques de Saroug, *Homélies contre les juifs*, ed. M. Albert, PO 38/1, Turnhout 1976 (with French tr.); Idem, "Mimro inédit de Jacques de Saroug sur le sacerdoce et sur l'autel", *PdO* 10 (1981/1982) 51-77 (with French tr.); Jacques de Saroug, *Six homélies festales en prose*, ed. F. Rilliet, PO 43/4, Turnhout 1986 (with French tr.); Jacques de Saroug, *Quatre homélies métriques sur la création*, ed. K. Alwan, CSCO 508 / Syr. 214 (French tr., CSCO 509 / Syr. 215), Lovanii 1989.

*Studies:* General introduction: W. Hage, "Jakob von Sarug", *TRE* 16 (1987) 470-474; K. Alwan, "Bibliographie générale raisonnée de Jacques de Saroug († 521)", *PdO* 13 (1986) 313-383. H. Connolly, "Jacob of Serug and the Diatessaron", *JTS* 8 (1907) 581-590; M. Black, "The Gospel Text of Jacob of Serug", *JTS* n.s. 2 (1951) 57-63; T. Jansma, "Étude sur l'Hexaméron de Jacques de Saroug", *OrSyr* 4 (1959) 3-42, 129-162, 253-284; Idem, "The Credo of Jacob of Serugh. A Return to Nicea and Constantinople", *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 44 (1960) 18-36; Idem, "Encore le credo de Jacques de Saroug. Nouvelles recherches sur l'argument historique concernant son orthodoxie", *OrSyr* 10 (1965) 75-88, 193-236, 331-370, 475-510; A. Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg*, 1-2, CSCO 344-345 / Subs. 39-40, Louvain 1973; S. Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh", *Symposium Syriacum* 1976, Rome 1978, 325-347;

A. Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmrē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg*, 3-4, CSCO 421-422 / Subs. 60-61, Louvain 1980; S.D. Beutin, "Commandments, Covenants and the Jews in Aphrahat, Ephrem and Jacob of Sarug", *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. D. Blumenthal, Chicago 1984, 135-156; K. Alwan, "L'homme, le 'microcosme' chez Jacques de Saroug († 521)", *PdO* 13 (1986) 51-77; F. Rilliet, "Rhétorique et style à l'époque de Jacques de Saroug", *IV Symposium Syriacum* 1984, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 289-295; S. Brock, "The Published Verse Homilies of Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai; Index of Incipits", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32 (1987) 279-313; K. Alwan, "Le 'Remzo' selon la pensée de Jacques de Saroug († 521)", *PdO* 15 (1988/1989) 91-106; Idem, "Était-il mortel ou immortel, l'homme, avant le péché pour Jacques de Saroug?", *OCP* 55 (1989) 5-31; F. Rilliet, *La métaphore du chemin dans la sotériologie de Jacques de Saroug*, SP 25, 1993, 324-331; Idem, "Une vielette du tournant des études syriaques à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Rétrospective sur Jacques de Saroug dans la science occidentale", *Aram* 5 (1993) 465-480; T. Bou Mansour, *La théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, 1, Kaslik 1993; 2, Kaslik 1999.

### SERGIUS OF RISH'AYNA

Chief doctor at Rish'ayna, perhaps a presbyter, certainly a Monophysite, but impugned and blamed in later Monophysite literature for his supposed luxury and avarice (accusations that may at least in part be explained by his having lent himself, in his last years, to the anti-Monophysite initiatives of the Chaldean patriarch of Antioch). Sergius († 536) was one of the greatest intellectuals and scholars of the Syrian Churches of his time. He studied for some years at Alexandria, perhaps at the start of the 500s, and certainly his writings on the Aristotelian corpus bear traces of the Alexandrian reading of the Stagyrte, as followed there in those years by, e.g., an Ammonius, and indeed as it would be followed by later Syrian circles, especially that of the Monophysites at work in the monastery of Qenneshrē, founded in 521 by John bar Aphthonia. But Sergius is not known just for his logical and philosophical writings. A doctor, his activity was long concentrated on his version of Galen's works, and indeed he began to expound the thought of the Greek philosopher at the insistent request of a disciple and admirer, Theodore (not the Nestorian Theodore of Merw, as some have written, but the bishop of Karh Guddan on the Tigris: cf. H. Hugonnard-Roche, "Notes...", 124, n. 13), who had been struck by the clarity and force of Galen's arguments, which Sergius, in his reply, traced back to the teachings of Aristotle, foundation of all "scientific" procedure.

This superabundant output must not make us forget the persevering diligence of the doctor of Rish'ayna in the field of theology: he made the first Syriac translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, which began to circulate around 520, and prefaced them with a treatise on the spiritual life, written beforehand, strongly Evagrian in tone (and remember

that Sergius retranslated the *Gnostic Centuries* of the Pontic monk, in a version that later Syrian tradition considered impious, but which was much closer than the earlier one to the Greek text, wherever it survives).

*Editions:* For information on the editions, translations and summaries, mostly by G. Furlani, of Sergius' many writings devoted to the translation of works by Galen and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, the introduction to the Aristotelian *corpus* itself or its individual problems, cf. the data provided by H. Hugonnard-Roche, "Aux origines..." cited *infra*; if the second Syriac version of Evagrius Ponticus' *Gnostic Centuries* is by Sergius, as maintained especially by A. Guillaumont in *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les grecs et les syriens*, Paris 1962, 215-227, it is edited in A. Guillaumont, *Les six centuries des "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique*, PO 28/1, Paris 1958; P. Sherwood, "Mimro de Serge de Reshayna sur la vie spirituelle", *OrSyr* 5 (1960) 433-459; 6 (1961) 95-115, 121-156 (with French tr.).

*Studies:* A. Baumstark, *Lucubrationes syro-graecae*, Leipzig 1894 (ch. 1: *De Sergio Resāmensi librorum Graecorum interprete Syro*, 358-438); P. Sherwood, "Sergius of Reshayna and the Syriac Versions of the Pseudo-Denys", *SE* 4 (1952) 174-184; H. Hugonnard-Roche, "Sur les versions syriaques des Catégories d'Aristote", *Journal Asiatique* 275 (1987) 205-222 (important study for defining the quality, progression and relationships of the various Syriac introductions to and/or translations of the Aristotelian text between the 6th and 7th/8th centuries – Sergius, Paul the Persian, Anonymous [perhaps Jonas, correspondent of Severus Sebokht], Athanasius of Balad, Jacob of Edessa, George of the Arabs – on which it also provides a good bibliography); Idem, "Aux origines de l'exégèse orientale de la logique d'Aristote: Sergius de Resh'aina", *Journal Asiatique* 277 (1989) 1-17 (good presentation, with accurate bibliography, of Sergius' writings and versions on medicine and philosophy); Idem, "Les 'Catégories' d'Aristote comme introduction à la philosophie, dans un commentaire syriaque de Sergius de Resh'aina († 536)", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 8 (1997) 339-363; Idem, "Notes sur Sergius de Resh'aina, traducteur du grec en syriaque et commentateur d'Aristote", *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism – Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences Dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs*, ed. G. Endress, R. Kruk, Leyden 1997, 121-143 (with annotated restatement of the bibliography on Sergius and, in an appendix, 140-143, an up-to-date list of studies).

#### STEPHEN BAR SUDAILI

In discussing John the Solitary, mention was made of a John of Apamea, distinct from him and representative of those Syrian circles characterized by a gnostic and "radical Origenism", against which Philoxenus conducted a lively polemic. Very probably a disciple of this John, in the early 6th century, was one of the most authoritative spokesmen of this tendency, Stephen bar Sudaili.

Born around 480 at Edessa, Stephen became a monk and at once stood out by the excellence of his conduct and studies. And yet, his considerations on the *eschaton*, which resumed teachings on the final admission of everyone, just or unjust, to the Kingdom, when God would

have become all in all (1 Cor 15, 28), met with a firm though affectionate refutation from Jacob of Sarug, who invited him to abandon them. Stephen however did not modify his way of thinking, and sought support for it from Philoxenus, probably because he knew of the Evagrian interpretations and sympathies of the bishop of Mabbūgh. Rebuked by him too, he found himself obliged to go to Palestine, perhaps to a place near Jerusalem: what is certain is that soon after 512 Philoxenus wrote a letter to the monks of that region to put them on guard against his heretical ideas.

Little is known of his later life. Returning after many years to Edessa, where he died probably around the middle of the century, there he wrote a work, handed down as the *Book of Hierotheos*, certainly after 520 and probably from the early 530s. It must be remembered that Hierotheos was the venerated teacher of Dionysius, according to the pseudo-Dionysian *corpus*, and that that collection of writings began to circulate only after 520 and was translated into Syriac by Sergius of Rish'ayna before 536, the year of his death.

Between Evagrian Origenism and Arcopagite theology, then, Stephen worked out his extreme, original meditation, which, once more privileging eschatological themes, culminated in the assertion of the passing away and abolition of all difference and name at the moment of the rising of the eschatological One, in which there will be neither Father nor Son, neither Creator nor creature.

*Editions:* F.S. Marsh, *The Book which is called the Book of the Holy Hierotheos*, London-Oxford 1926 (with English tr.; repr., Farnborough 1969, Amsterdam 1979).

*Studies:* General introduction: A. Guillaumont, "Étienne bar Soudaili", *DSP* 4 (1960) 1481-1488.

A.L. Frothingham, *Stephen Bar Sudaili, the Syrian Mystic, and the Book of Hierotheos*, Leyden 1886.

#### IV. FROM THE THIRD OR FOURTH DECADE OF THE 6TH TO THE END OF THE 8TH CENTURY:

##### THE CONSOLIDATION OF DISTINCT TRADITIONS IN BYZANTINE, PERSIAN AND THEN UNIFIED ARAB SYRIA

The periodization into we have chosen to distribute the material provided by Syriac Christian literature emphasizes at this point a transition, in the second quarter of the 6th century, from first definition and crisis to the establishment of the different communities that emerged from the Christological debate and from the more general heightening of distinct theological and exegetical traditions in the Churches of the previous century. In West Syria, the 520s saw the crisis of the first Monophysite period, at the very time when its more or less intransigent protagonists were dying. Only between the third and fourth decades of the century would the Monophysite Churches reorganize themselves, chiefly through the initiative of Jacob Baradaeus, but also thanks to the consolidation of monastic experiences that would increasingly integrate Greek insights, even in the sphere of the "secular" sciences, into the training of the region's churchmen and monks. A man such as Peter of Callinicus, patriarch of Antioch from 580/581 to his death on 22 April 591, is, in his writings – some Syriac but mostly Greek, though soon translated into Syriac – a good witness to the engagement of the Syrian intellectual elites in the sophisticated theological debate of the time – the Christological argument, certainly, but also, e.g., the anti-tritheist. Many translations, moreover, attest the interest, at least among the Melkites or Chalcedonians and the Monophysites, in an ever more conceptually subtle elaboration of theological and Christological formulae, and the growing weight of "dialectic" in the controversy. They also afford further proof of the close contacts and interrelationship between Alexandrian and Antiochene circles: good evidence of this is the dossier of texts linked to the conversion to Chalcedonian dogma of the Jacobites Proba and John Barbur, who had gone to Alexandria in the train of Peter of Callinicus and were there convinced by Stephen the Sophist, first one, then the other, of the untenability of the Monophysite view (cf. P. Bettolo, *Una raccolta di opuscoli calcedonesi*, 1979, and K.-H. Uthemann, *Stephanus von Alexandrien...*).

Between 520 and 525, accompanied by Thomas of Edessa, a man also passed through Alexandria who from 540 to 552 was to make a

powerful contribution to the restoration of the "Nestorian" Church of the East, shaken in previous decades by a crisis that had considerably weakened it. There Mar Aba would have had contacts with various intellectuals and certainly with Cosmas Indicopleustes, author of the *Topographia christiana*, whose 5th book, in its Christological section where "the cosmographer gives way to the theologian", bears probable traces, it has been maintained, of the very hand of "one of his Nestorian friends, perhaps Mar Aba, more probably Thomas of Edessa" (Wolska-Conus, in Cosma Indicopleusta, *Topografia cristiana*, I4). And it is interesting to observe that the scornful polemic of Philoponus, in his *De opificio mundi*, written probably in 546-549, against the cosmology (and theology) of Theodore, which he also read in Cosmas, denounces the (presumed) intellectual coarseness of an Eastern "Syrian" tradition careless of Greek culture, its attainments and the problems it posed for Christian exegesis and theology. Whatever judgment may be passed on the actual quality of the teaching of the school of Nisibis and the traditions of the Church of Persia, we must record a second acquisition of Mar Aba's journey to the West: the *Liber Heraclidis*, which he seems to have got translated between 539 and 540, viz. Nestorius' *Apologia* in defence of his own Christological doctrine, written on the morrow of the reading of the *Tomus Leonis* and supplemented by an introduction by a later Constantinopolitan author. Nestorius' text (on which cf. A. De Halleux, *Nestorius...*) would be decisive for the Church of Persia: the formulae that would be imposed in its most intransigent circles, finally to prevail from 612 over the more traditional Theodorian formulae in the whole Church of the East – at least officially, since the resumption of discussions in schools and monasteries would often record their problematic character –, were in fact Nestorian.

The fourth decade of the 6th century thus opened a new process of consolidation of the Christian communities of Syria, in their ever sharper distinction, even mutual aversion, apart from momentary proximities, apart from the welcome that each sometimes accorded to writings, especially monastic, proceeding from the other.

The advent of Islam, following a season of protracted wars between Persia and Byzantium, would oblige the Christian communities to take note of a new domination, whose religious status was both more familiar and more disturbing, due to the apostasies it caused because of its very proximity. But the following notes cease precisely with the first full awareness of the need to develop an apologetic in defence of the Christian faith against the criticisms made by Islam, especially in the Trinitarian and Christological spheres: the 7th and 8th centuries, however, would still be times of exceptional flowering and authoritativeness for the Churches of Syria, even in the literary sphere.

*Studies* (very selective choice): W. Wolska, *Recherches sur la "Topographie Chrétienne" de Cosmas Indicopleustès. Théologie et science au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1962; L. Abramowski, A.E. Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts 1-2*, Cambridge 1972; R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham, "The Discourse of Mar Peter Callinicus on the Crucifixion", *JTS* 26 (1975) 23-37 (with English tr.); D.D. Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus. The State of Research. A Review of Sources and a New Approach", *Muséon* 91 (1978) 45-86; *Una raccolta di opuscoli calcedonesi (Ms. Sinai 10)*, ed. P. Bettiolo, CSCO 403 / Syr. 177 (Italian tr., CSCO 404 / Syr. 178), Louvain 1979; J.-M. Fiey, *Chrétiens Syriacques sous les Abbassides*, CSCO 420 / Subs. 59, Louvain 1980; R.Y. Ebied, A. Van Roey, L.R. Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum – Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, OLA 10, Leuven 1981 (with English tr.); K.-H. Uthemann, "Stephanos von Alexandrien und die Konversion des Jakobiten Probos, des späteren Metropolitens von Chalkedon. Ein Beitrag zur Rolle der Philosophie in der Kontroverstheologie des 6. Jahrhunderts", *After Chalcedon. Studies in Theology and Church History*, ed. C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, L. Van Rompay, OLA 18, 1985, 381-399; L. Sako, *Le rôle de la hiérarchie syriaque orientale dans les rapports diplomatiques entre la Perse et Byzance aux V<sup>e</sup>-VII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris 1986; S. Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to Early Seventh Centuries", essay of 1985 now in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, London 1992, XII; Cosma Indicopleusta, *Topografia cristiana – Libri I-V*, ed. A. Garzya, with a Preface by W. Wolska-Conus and a Postface by R. Maisano, Naples 1992; A. De Halleux, "Nestorius, histoire et doctrine", *Irénikon* 66 (1993) 38-51, 163-178.

#### CAVE OF TREASURES

The *Cave of Treasures*, which is attested in many Eastern versions, bears in some mss. the title *Discourse on "In principio" or Book of the Order of Generation from Adam to Christ*. This anonymous work describes, with particular accuracy up to Melchizedek, then mostly rather succinctly, the biblical story from creation to Pentecost, making use of a Haggadic style. The work has reached us in two recensions, one western, the other eastern, which in their present form do not seem to go beyond the 6th century, though many scholars think it likely they are revisions of an earlier text, dating from the 4th or perhaps even the 3rd century. An early date seems suggested particularly by the work's last section, which forms a brief apologia, addressed to "our brother in Christ, the splendid Namosaya", "friend in doctrine" and "brother in the law", aimed at refuting the accusations made by the Jews against Mary, presented as an "adulteress", and their observations on the genealogy of Jesus.

In its parts relating to the book of Genesis, the *Cave of Treasures* shows close parallels with the exegesis of Ephrem and, in those relating to Adam, also with apocryphal literature and Jewish exegetical traditions.

*Edition: La caverne des Trésors – Les deux recensions syriaques*, ed. Su-Min Ri, CSCO 486 / Syr. 207 (French tr., CSCO 487 / Syr. 208), Lovanii 1987.

*Translation – English: The Book of the Cave of Treasures: a History of the Patriarchs and the Kings their Successors from the Creation to the Crucifixion of Christ*, translated from the Syriac text of BM add. ms. 25875 by E.A.W. Budge, London 1927.

*Studies: Su-Min Ri, "La caverne des Trésors. Problèmes d'analyse littéraire", IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 183-190; G. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain, Eden and its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity", *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis. Intrigue in the Garden*, ed. G.A. Robbins, Lewiston/Queenston 1988, 187-224 (more general study, containing an analysis of the contribution of the *Cave of Treasures* to the Syrian exegesis of the theme); A. Kowalski, "Il sangue nel racconto della passione di Cristo nella Caverna dei Tesori siriana", *Atti della VI settimana di Studi "Sangue e Antropologia nella Teologia"* 1987, Rome 1989, 163-173; Su-Min Ri, "Le Testament d'Adam et la Caverne des Trésors", *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1990, 111-122; M.E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, Atlanta 1992 (contains a section on this text).

#### DANIEL OF SALAH

Not much is known of Daniel of Salah, author of a three-volume commentary on the Psalms, only very partly edited, composed around 541/542 and dedicated to a certain John, hegumen of a monastery in the region of Apamea. A Monophysite author, Daniel allows us by his work to understand the procedures of Scriptural interpretation in use in the anti-Chalcedonian Syrian circles of his time. In particular, it is interesting to note his conscious use of some methods and findings of Antiochene exegesis, though this does not prevent him, at a deeper level, from developing a reading of meanings of the text that are not so much historical as prophetic – Christological, but also relating to the affairs of the soul –, explored partly through a comparison between the parallel readings of the Hebrew and the Greek.

*Edition: G. Diettrich, Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter in Verbindung mit zwei Homilien aus dem grossen Psalmenkommentar des Daniel von Salah*, Giessen 1901 (with German tr.).

*Studies: P. Cowe, Daniel of Salah as Commentator on the Psalter*, SP 20, 1989, 152-159; L. Van Rompay, "The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation", *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of its Interpretation*, ed. M. Sæbo, Göttingen 1996, 612-641, 639-640; D.G.K. Taylor, "The Manuscript Tradition of Daniel of Salah's Psalm Commentary", *Symposium Syriacum VII*, 11-14 August 1996, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1998, 61-69.

#### THE SCHOOLS OF NISIBIS AND SELEUCIA-CTESIPHON IN THE 6TH CENTURY

A 16th-c. ms. from Seert hands down a collection of thirteen treatises under the overall title of *Explanations of the Feasts of the Economy*, all, or nearly all, that remains of a literary genre quite widespread in the Nestorian schools between 500 and 700. *Explanations* or *causes* were theological discourses of some length, aimed at illustrating both "the reasons for a certain celebration, liturgical or other" (like the inauguration

of the annual courses in a particular school) "and the different aspects of the theological mystery underlying it" (Macomber, *Six Explanations*, CSCO 356 / Syr. 156, 1974, VI). Narsai at Nisibis seems to have been the initiator of this type of exposition, but it corresponded well enough to tones already present in the Edessene circles whence it came: enough to mention the single example of Jacob of Sarug's insistence on the successive moments of God's essentially educational work with man. Soon, at any rate, put down in writing, these *explanations* enjoyed a wide circulation in all the monasteries and schools of the Church of Persia. The fact of their being originally rooted in a liturgical context, the "economic" or salvation-historical rather than speculative orientation of the theological reflection they attested, the paraenetic tones, tending and exhorting to "virtue", on which they closed, all led to them becoming the favourite way, through preaching, of admitting the theology of the school into the liturgy of the Churches, and hence of the education and intellectual formation, so to speak, of the Christian community.

In fact we have evidence of these works from texts by later authors, all of them directly or indirectly linked to the school of Nisibis from the time of its direction by Abraham of Beth Rabban (510-569/570) to the rather controversial direction of Henana of Adiabene (572-610), though some of them later taught at the school of Seleucia-Ctesiphon or other lesser schools. They include: Ishai, who wrote an *Explanation (of the Commemoration) of the Martyrs* based on the words of Mar Abraham of Beth Rabban; Mar Aba, catholicos of the Church of Persia between 540 and 552, but before that a teacher at Nisibis and then, towards the end of the 530s, restorer or founder of the school of the capital city of the Sasanid empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon – we have nothing actually by him, but his discourses were remembered and reworked by his disciples, Thomas of Edessa and Cyrus, in writings that survive; Henana, a great controversial theologian of the Nisibene school in the years of the decisive fixing of the exegetical and dogmatic traditions of the Church of the East, which decided against him between the late 6th and early 7th centuries; and finally his disciple Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya, who between 585 and 596 celebrated the greatness of his teacher and of the school he directed, last of the schools willed and raised up by God to instruct men, from the time of creation throughout the whole of his "economy". After some general bibliographical information, we will give brief notes on the works of these authors and on studies of them.

*Studies:* A. Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, CSCO 266 / Subs. 26, Louvain 1965; R. Macina, "L'homme à l'école de Dieu. D'Antioche à Nisibe: profil herméneutique, théologique et kérygmétique du mouvement scolastique nestorien. Monographie programmatique", *Proche Orient Chrétien* 32 (1982) 86-124, 263-301; 33 (1983) 39-103; cf. also the 1964 and 1974 studies of W.F. Macomber cited *infra*: c).

a) THOMAS OF EDESSA. Before 540, probably between 538 and 539, at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, where he had followed Mar Aba who became "interpreter" of the school founded there (on whom cf. information and bibliography in the introduction to this section, supplemented by P. Peeters' 1946 essay, "Observations sur la vie de Mar Aba, Catholicos de l'Église Perse (540-552)", now in Idem, *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, Brussels 1951, 117-163), he wrote an *Explanation of the Nativity* and an *Explanation of the Epiphany* (the latter still uncited) inspired by his master's teachings. He died at Constantinople in c. 543, as Cosmas Indicopleustes tells us in his *Topographia Christiana*.

*Editions:* *Thomae Edesseni Tractatus de Nativitate Domini nostri Christi*, ed. S.J. Carr, Romae 1898 (with Latin tr.).

*Studies:* P. Bettolo, "Scuola ed economia divina nella catechesi della chiesa di Persia – Appunti su un testo di Tommaso di Edessa († ca 542)", *Esegesi e catechesi nei Padri (secc. IV-VII)*, ed. S. Felici, Rome 1994, 147-157.

b) ISHAI. A teacher at the school of Nisibis, then probably "interpreter", or rector, of that of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, by appointment of Mar Aba; member of a Persian embassy, led by Paul of Nisibis, to the court of Justinian apparently between 546 and 547, he was an authoritative and esteemed churchman. Of him there remains a single *explanation*, on the commemoration of the martyrs.

*Editions:* "Išai: Traité sur les martyrs", *Traité d'Išai le docteur et de Henana d'Adiabène*, ed. A. Scher, PO 7/1, Paris 1911, 15-52 (with French tr.).

c) CYRUS OF EDESSA. A disciple of Mar Aba at Nisibis together with Thomas of Edessa and then, like Thomas, with him at Seleucia-Ctesiphon; he seems to have been part of a group of translators who worked under Mar Aba's direction, and in particular to have made the version of the *Liber Heraclidis*, containing the *Apologia* with which Nestorius in his years of exile had replied to the *Tomus ad Flavianum*, a version provided with a later anonymous introduction – a decisive text for the development of the Christological debate within the Church of Persia. After Thomas's death, i.e. after about 543, he continued his work as a writer of *explanations* of the main feasts of the liturgical year, until 551, date of Mar Aba's return from exile. He finally seems to have founded a theological school at al-Hira, where, according to some witnesses, he brought Mar Aba's remains for permanent burial.

*Editions:* *Six Explanations of the Liturgical Feasts by Cyrus of Edessa – An East Syrian Theologian of the Mid Sixth Century*, ed. W.F. Macomber, CSCO 355 / Syr. 155 (English tr., CSCO 356 / Syr. 156), Louvain 1974.

*Studies:* W.F. Macomber, "The Theological Synthesis of Cyrus of Edessa, An East Syrian Theologian of the Mid Sixth Century", *OCP* 30 (1964) 5-38, 363-384.



d) HENANA. *Enfant terrible* of the Church of Persia, one of whose greatest theologians he was: from 572, the year he became director of the school of Nisibis, Henana was a protagonist of the contemporary exegetical and theological debate, provoking bitter reactions against what were considered his innovations both on the level of Scriptural interpretation (he promoted an exegesis less "literalistic" than that of Theodore, based apparently on the writings of John Chrysostom) and on that of Christology, rejecting the properly Nestorian doctrine of the Son's two hypostases. For this, in 596/597 a compact group of students, among them the future Catholicos Isho'yabh III, abandoned the school. A more decisive factor was that his teaching met open hostility from the circles around Abraham the Great, who before June 571 had founded a monastery on Mount Izla, north-east of Nisibis, which soon became the heart of the revival of Nestorian monasticism. Here, in particular, worked Babai the Great, the major architect of the triumph of strictly Nestorian Christological views, formalized in an assembly of bishops held in 612. Manuscript tradition has preserved only two of Henana's *explanations*, but we should not overlook the persistence of his influence, which would reach (it is maintained) authors like Martyrius Sahnuna in the 7th century or Joseph Hazzaya in the 8th, nor the possibility of finding borrowed fragments of his OT exegeses in the works of later commentators.

*Editions*: "Henana d'Adiabène: Deux traités sur le Vendredi d'or et les Rogations", *Traité d'Iṣā' le docteur et de Henana d'Adiabène*, ed. A. Scher, PO 7/1, Paris 1911, 53-82 (with French tr.).

*Studies*: G.J. Reinink, " 'Edessa Grew Dim and Nisibis Shone Forth': the School of Nisibis at the Transition of the Sixth-Seventh Century", *Centres of Learning. Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. J.H.W. Drijvers, A.A. MacDonald, Leyden-New York-Cologne 1995, 77-89.

e) BARHADBESHABBA 'ARBAYA. A disciple of Henana at Nisibis; between 585 and 596, year of the school's grave crisis, produced by his master's teaching, he wrote a discourse *On the Foundation of the Schools*, very useful, among other things, for understanding the traditional materials used by the Nestorian doctors for their exegetical work. The identification of this author with that of the *Ecclesiastical History*, on which cf. *supra*, Introduction 2, *Chronicles* 6, p. 416, remains uncertain.

*Editions*: Mar Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaya, évêque de Halwan (VI<sup>e</sup> siècle), *Cause de la fondation des écoles*, ed. A. Scher, PO 4/4, Paris 1908 (with French tr.).

### BABAI THE GREAT

Babai is one of the central figures of the Church of the East in the 7th century. Born in a village of Beth Zabdai, he received his education at

the school of Nisibis, where he also taught before becoming a monk at the Great Monastery on Mount Izla. Called in 604 to become its hegumen, shortly afterwards he was unable to avoid a severe crisis in the community that led to the dispersal of part of the brethren (but this soon led to the foundation of various important monastic communities, including that of Beth Awē in the region of Marga, whose importance grew ceaselessly in the 7th century). Nevertheless his virtue and his doctrine allowed him to play a decisive role in maintaining orthodoxy and discipline in the whole Church of Persia, which in the 20 years between 609 and 628, partly due to the pressure at court of Gabriel of Singar, the king's physician and favourite, an excommunicated Nestorian accepted among the Jacobites, remained without a catholicos. His vehement polemic against Henana and Justinian and his Christological construction, based on the mere union of *prosopon* in Christ between God and man, two natures and two distinct *qnume* (hypostases?); his learned commentary on the texts of Evagrius, undisputed witness and teacher of spiritual practice and knowledge in the monastic circles of the Church of Persia; his work reforming monasticism itself: all these make him truly the great churchman and Doctor of the Nestorian community in one of its most difficult periods and on the eve of yet profounder transformations, caused by the irruption of Islam into the region.

*Editions*: "Babai the Great: History of our Father and most Holy Mar Giwargis, Priest, Monk, Confessor and Martyr" (in Syriac), P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha, des trois patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques nestoriens*, Paris 1895, 416-571 (Syriac text only; German tr. by O. Braun: *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, Kempten, 2nd ed., vol. 37, 221-277; French tr. of just the passages relating to the polemic against Henana: J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon orientale ou recueil des synodes nestoriens*, Paris 1902, 625-634); "Babai the Great: Commentary on the Gnostic Centuries of Evagrius Ponticus", W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus*, AKGWG n.s. XIII/2 (1912), 8-471 (with German tr.; on this commentary, cf. A. Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalaia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les grecs et chez les syriens*, Paris 1962, 259-290); *Babai Magni Liber de Unione*, ed. A. Vasschalde (contains the treatise *De unione* properly so-called and, appended to it, a minor treatise: *Adversus eos qui dicunt: Quemadmodum anima et corpus sunt una hypostasis, ita Deus Verbum et homo sunt una hypostasis*), CSCO 79 / Syr. 34 (Latin tr., CSCO 80 / Syr. 35), Paris 1915 (anast. ed. of both volumes, Louvain 1953); "The Rules of Babai", A. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism*, Stockholm 1960, 176-184 (text of an Arabic version with English tr.).

*Studies*: P. Krüger, "Zum theologischen Menschenbild Babais des Grossen nach seinem noch unveröffentlichten Kommentar zu den beiden Sermones des Mönches Markus über 'Das geistige Gesetz' ", *OrChr* 44 (1960) 46-74; Idem, "Cognitio sapientiae". *Die Erkenntnis der Wahrheit nach den unveröffentlichten beiden Sermones Babais des Grossen über das Gesetz des Mönches Markus*, SP 5, 1962, 377-381; Idem, "Das Problem des Pelagianismus bei Babai dem Grossen", *OrChr* 46 (1962) 77-86; Idem, "Das Geheimnis der Taufe in den Werken Babais des Grossen",

*OrChr* 47 (1963) 98-110; L. Abramowski, "Die Christologie Babais des Grossen", *Symposium Syriacum* 1972, Rome 1974, 219-245; Idem, "Babai der Grosse: Christologische Probleme und ihre Lösungen", *OCP* 41 (1975) 289-343; A. Guillaumont "Le témoignage de Babai le Grand sur les messaliens", *Symposium Syriacum* 1976, Rome 1978, 257-265; G. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great*, Kottayam 1982.

### ISHO'YABH II AND ISHO'YABH III, CATHOLICOI OF THE CHURCH OF PERSIA

Isho'yabh († 646) was born at Gdala, not far from Mosul, in Bet Aramaye, in the second half of the 6th century. Like many, he studied at Nisibis, at the time when Henana was directing the school there. Averse to Henana's teaching, in protest he left the city with many other students in 596/597 and found a welcome at Balad, where Bishop Mark made him head of a school founded at that time. On Mark's death, Isho'yabh succeeded him and in 628 he was a candidate for the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, vacant since 609. As catholicos, in 630 he found himself leading a Persian embassy called to negotiate peace with the victorious Byzantine emperor Heraclius. During his stay with Heraclius, the chronicles narrate that the emperor interrogated him about the faith of the Church of the East, and his replies were recognized by the patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, present at the meeting, as wholly concordant with the faith of the Greek Church, so much that the emperor "asked him to celebrate mass so that he could receive communion from his hands". The episode aroused strong protests in the Church of Persia, partly because of the omission from the diptychs, read during the liturgy, of the names of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, which the catholicos had complied with. Similar perplexities, it must be added, were aroused by other traits of Isho'yabh's teaching, such as his interpretation of the writings of Gregory Nazianzen. Yet it must be observed that he was not alone on this embassy. Among the bishops who accompanied him was another Isho'yabh, bishop of Nineveh, destined to succeed him and particularly intransigent in his orthodoxy, of whom we have some letters full of praise for the catholicos's conduct in these circumstances.

Tensions, whether theological, exegetical or linked to ecclesiastical discipline, thus resurfaced in the Church of the East, and a surviving letter of Isho'yabh himself is good evidence of this. Ample trace of these tensions appears some years later in the activity of Isho'yabh III, the Great († 659), who had accompanied his predecessor to Heraclius in 630. He was born c. 580 in a village of Adiabene, to a great landowner, a friend of that Jacob († 628), a monk in Abraham's Great Monastery on Mount Izla who, expelled from there, had founded a monastery at

Bet Awē in the region of Marga, towards the end of the first decade of the 7th century, which quickly became one of the major ecclesiastical centres of the region and the whole Church of the East. Here, returning from Nisibis, Isho'yabh became a monk and here he became firm friends with another monk close to Jacob, whom he was later to oppose, Martyrius. Becoming bishop of Nineveh in 627/628, metropolitan of Adiabene a decade later and finally catholicos of the Church of Persia from 649, Isho'yabh developed a vast, energetic reforming activity, on which his letters also provide information: he revised and perfected the liturgical cycle; reorganized the celebration of the *memoria* of the saints; paid minute attention to ecclesiastical discipline and rites; and governed the Church intelligently at a difficult time, marked by uncertain relations with the new Arab rulers and a more intense struggle with the Jacobites and heresy, one of whose major aspects was the clash with Martyrius (*sec infra*).

*Editions:* L. Sako, *Lettre christologique du Patriarche syro-oriental Isho'yabh II de Gdala (628-646)*, Rome 1983 (crit. ed., French tr. and study); Iso'yabh Patriarchae III, *Liber Epistularum*, ed. R. Duval, CSCO 11 / Syr. 11, Paris 1904 (Latin tr., CSCO 12 / Syr. 12, Paris 1905 – anast. ed. of both volumes, Louvain 1962).

*Studies:* L. Sako, "Ishoyabh II's Syro-Oriental Terminology and its Significance", *Christian Orient* 5 (1984) 134-141; J.-M. Fiey, "Isho'yaw le Grand. Vie du Catholicos nestorien Isho'yaw III d'Adiabène (580-659)", *OCP* 35 (1969) 305-333; 36 (1970) 5-46.

### MARTYRIUS SAHDONA

Martyrius represents an "ascetic spirituality", "far from mysticism, whether Evagrian or Macarian" (A. De Halleux, "Un chapitre retrouvé...", 258), expressed in an important original work which, rather, preserves traces of pseudepigraphical New Testament literature, the *Expositions* of Aphrahat and non-surviving monastic writings, and is centred on a confession of faith expressed in "biblical terms and in a balanced way, outside any dogmatic precision" (*ibid.* 259). Born at Halmon in Bet Nuhadra, he became a monk at Bet Awē, probably between 615 and 620. He was very close to Jacob, the monastery's founder, and pronounced the funeral eulogy at his death (628). Consecrated bishop of Mahoze d'Arewan in Bet Garmai between 635 and 640, partly on the recommendation of his friend and admirer Isho'yabh, then metropolitan of Adiabene, Martyrius drew down the latter's wrath for "the foolish error of the one hypostasis" in Christ, professed by him in his *Book of Perfection*, composed in his youth, at the age of 28, as he repeats several times, contradicting the Nestorian formulae, of two hypostases in Christ, that had prevailed in the Church of Persia since the episcopal assembly of 612. In reality, as we observed above, in Martyrius' case this was

not a "heretical" development of the contemporary Christological debate, reopened at Nisibis in those years by a disciple of Henana, Isaiah of Tahal, but the restatement of a wholly traditional formulation of the dogma, with little interest in or care for the reasons and terms of an ever more "scholastic" controversy. From the early 640s, however, Isho'yabih, becoming aware of the work, strongly opposed his friend, finally obtaining his deposition from the see of Mahoze and exile, apparently at Edessa.

*Editions:* Martyrius (Sahdona), *Oeuvres spirituelles*, ed. A. De Halleux, CSCO 200; 214; 252; 254 / Syr. 86, 90, 110, 112 (French tr., CSCO 201; 215; 253; 255 / Syr. 87, 91, 111, 113), Louvain 1960, 1961, 1965 and 1965 (the first three tomes contain the *Book of Perfection*; the fourth, the books of *Letters to Solitary Friends and Spiritual Maxims*); S. Brock, "A Further Fragment of the Sinai Sahdona Manuscript", *Muséon* 81 (1969) 139-154; A. De Halleux, "Un chapitre retrouvé du Livre de la perfection de Martyrius", *Muséon* 88 (1975) 253-296 (with French tr.).

*Studies:* General introduction: L. Leloir, "Martyrius", *DSP* 10 (1980) 737-742. A. De Halleux, "La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona dans l'évolution du nestorianisme", *OCP* 23 (1957) 5-32; Idem, "Martyrios-Sahdona. La vie mouvementée d'un 'hérétique' de l'Église nestorienne", *OCP* 24 (1958) 93-128; L. Welbé, "Textes bibliques dans les écrits de Martyrius-Sahdona", *Melto* 5 (1969) 61-112.

### NESTORIAN MONASTICISM

The second half of the 6th century was certainly the period of the revival of Nestorian monasticism, boosted by personalities like Abraham the Great or Abraham of Nathpar. Yet it seems that many themes and many experiences were being stated in the writings and lives of monks of the beginning of the next century, in years when many texts and tracts of earlier Greek and Syrian generations were being recovered and harmonized, texts not just exclusively monastic but in which, at many levels and sometimes in continuity with minor or marginalized traditions, diverging routes took shape, often intersecting and conflicting with former ones.

Whoever reads, e.g., the first sections of the work by Thomas of Marga, a monk at Bet Awē in the Marga region and then metropolitan of Bet Garmai in the 9th century, on the history of the monastery he grew up in, describing the events that led to its foundation by Jacob († 628), previously a monk at the Great Monastery built by Abraham on the Holy Mountain, cannot fail to perceive a tension on which it is useful to insist.

Thomas relates that what caused Jacob's departure from the Mount Izla community was a crisis resolved too precipitately and harshly by Babai the Great at a time when he had recently become the monastery's hegumen, i.e., it seems, in the years immediately after 604. At that time,

in connection with the scandalous conduct of some brothers, there was a clash in the community between zeal and meekness, the determination to eradicate impiety from the Lord's house and the humility of one who knows no other sin than his own nor believes that he has to correct anyone. Jacob, who was found to be mutely upholding this latter line of conduct, was immediately censured and expelled from the monastery, and even some Elders, who defended his cause, gradually abandoned him afterwards. But tension, if not opposition, between "zeal for truth" and "charity that covers sins" was nothing new; it seems to recapitulate the reasons for the difficult cohabitation of the just and the perfect in the one Church, as the *Liber graduum* described; to restate the oscillation between *akribia* and *philanthropia* in the Christological controversies, at which the Syrian Philoxenus, among others, was adept; to foreshadow the tones of Isaac, his paradoxical claim, which would arouse dissent and opposition: "Mercy and justice in one soul are like a man who worships God and idols in the same house". Indeed, while a similar insistence on charity was well prepared by the sayings of Macarius the Egyptian, by Evagrius' exaltation of meekness and humility, by the tones of the pseudo-Macarian literature, whose contacts with Syrian circles are certain – sources all well known and used by Thomas of Marga –, on the other hand ardent militancy and intransigence in doctrine and conduct are certainly not ignored in monastic texts – and the story, told by Babai, of Mar George, "monk, priest, confessor and martyr", crucified in 615, is a wonderful and entirely pertinent example of this.

Babai became a decisive author for later Nestorian monastic tradition, partly because of his learned commentary on the *Centuries* of Evagrius, an author almost universally dear to the Christians and monks of Syria, which he thoroughly integrated into the theology and Christology of the Church of the East, of which he was one of the greatest guardians, one of the most decisive interpreters, especially concerning their rigorously Nestorian recapitulation against Henana, as we have seen. Yet stirrings of less divisive Antiochene Christologies would remain or resurface in the schools and monasteries of that Church, in connection with the "mingling" of man and God in spiritual experience and the *eschaton* of which it allowed a glimpse, based on the "mingling" that had taken place in Christ: for this, such as John of Dalyatha and Joseph Hazzaya would be accused of Messalianism.

But this was not just a recapitulation of the Christological dogma closest, in individual authors, to that of Theodore or John Chrysostom, or of an Evagrius caught in those expressions of his that most insist on the union between Creator and creature. Perhaps, in some circles, it also reflects the presence – more submerged or at least less evident to

us, overwhelmed as it is by the prevalence of "Greek" sources, but no less extensive for that – of different texts. When Isho'yab III, even before becoming catholicos, reacted, on the basis of Babai the Great's orthodoxy, to the Christological ideas of a Martyrius-Sahdona, who like him had been at Bet Awē, who had even been his friend, he found in him, as we have noted, a writing free from Evagrian echoes, reflecting rather the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat, rich in the references and allusions to Scripture so infrequent in authors such as Isaac; indebted also to authors like the surprising, anonymous, otherwise unknown creed, "Teacher of Charity", which sings the potency of the harmony / union of brothers, almost another God to God – though meditation on charity leads many, whether an Isaac or a Joseph Hazzaya, to emotion, almost to exaltation.

So then, different routes, emergence of different memories, now polarized and distanced, now converging and interweaving; now kindling conflict and migration, now producing community and communion. Of these routes the authors mentioned below, all in some way close in their interpretations, almost even predilections (e.g. the solitary life strictly understood), are valuable witnesses, often still little studied, in their interweaving with the ecclesial and political events of their time, in their relationship with the nascent and soon to be victorious Islam.

*Studies:* A recent general introduction to Nestorian monasticism in the 7th and 8th centuries is in R. Beulay, *La lumière sans forme. Introduction à la mystique chrétienne syro-orientale*, Chevotogne s.d. [1987]. Among earlier sources on these monks and authors, see especially, for Thomas of Marga's work cited above, E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas of Marga*, 2 voll. (1 Syriac text; 2, English tr.), London 1893; or P. Bedjan, "Liber Superiorum seu historia monasteriorum auctore Thomas episcopo Margensi", *Liber Superiorum seu historia monastica*, Paris-Leipzig 1901, 1-436 (on Thomas himself cf. J.-M. Fiey, "Thomas de Marga. Notule de littérature syriaque", *Muséon* 78 [1965] 361-366); for the more or less contemporary *Liber castitatis* of Isho'denah of Basra, or Bassora, in southern Iraq (second half of 9th century; his work seems to have been composed between 860 and 870: cf. J.-M. Fiey, "Isho'denah, métropolitain de Basra, et son oeuvre", *OrSyr* 11 [1966] 431-450), see J.-B. Chabot, "Le Livre de la Chasteté composé par Jesusdenah, Évêque de Baqrah", *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 16, Rome 1896, 225-291 (with French tr.); or P. Bedjan, "Liber fundatorum monasteriorum in regno Persarum et Arabum", *Liber Superiorum seu historia monastica...* cit., 437-517.

### 1. Minor monastic authors

Before passing on to the more important monks, we will give a brief list of minor monastic authors, or presumed such, with a minimum of bibliographical information.

1) *Abraham of Nathpar* (second half of 6th century). Numerous works of his remain, but many of them have been quite wrongly attributed to him: cf. A. Penna, "Abramo di Nathpar", *Rivista degli*

*Studi Orientali* 32 (1957) 415-431; R. Tonneau, "Abraham de Natpar", *OrSyr* 4 (1957) 337-350.

2) *Abraham of Kashkar*, the Great († 588). Founder, before June 571, of a monastery on Mount Izla; the rules he drew up are in A. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism*, Stockholm 1960, 150-162.

3) *Dadisho'*. A native of Bet Aramaye, he was Abraham's successor as head of the Mount Izla community from 588 to 604; he drew up rules, dated January 588, i.e. the very moment of his assumption of the direction of the monastery: cf. A. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents...* cit., 163-175.

4) *Babai of Nisibis* (early 7th century). Founder of a "small" monastery on Mount Izla, not far from the "great" one of Abraham, whose disciple he was; among other things we have his letter to Cyriaeus, edited by S. Brock in *Malpanuta d-abahata suryaye d-'al slota*, Monastery of St Ephrem (Holland) 1988, 93-114 (English tr. by S. Brock: *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, Kalamazoo [MI] 1989, 138-162; on its attribution to Babai of Nisibis, cf. Isaac of Nineveh [Isaac the Syrian], "The Second Part", *Chapters IV-XLI*, ed. S. Brock, CSCO 555 / *Syr* 225, Lovanii 1995, xx-xxi).

5) *Gregory of Cyprus*. A contemporary of Henana of Adiabene, against whom he wrote polemics, and of Babai the Great, whose friend he may have been, he was certainly a major author, of vast learning, little studied: cf. I. Hausherr, *Gregorii monachi Cyprii de theoria sancta, quae syriace interpretata dicitur visio divina*, Rome 1937 (contains an extensive study, as well as the edition of Gregory's seventh treatise, on holy contemplation, with Latin version); and J. Kirchmeyer, "Grégoire de Chypre", *DSP* 6 (1967) 920-922.

6) *Shubhahmaran* (early 7th century). Author of many ascetic and polemical writings, particularly against Gabriel of Singar, the powerful physician and adviser of Chosroes II († 628) who, from a Nestorian, became a Jacobite; one book remains, whose edition is being prepared for CSCO by D.J. Lane, and of which only single, detached pages have so far been published: cf. F. Nau, "À propos d'un feuillet d'un manuscrit arabe", *Muséon* 43 (1930) 85-116; G. Troupeau, "Une page retrouvée du 'Livre des Parties' de Subhahmaran", *Symposium Syriacum* 1976, Rome 1978, 57-61; and S. Brock, the Appendix, "Mingana Syriac Fragments from Sinai", to "Mingana Syriac 628: A Folio from a Revision of the Peshitta Song of Songs", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 40 (1995) 51-53; on the book and its author cf. D.J. Lane, "Mar Shubhahmaran's Book of Gifts as an Example of a Syriac Literary Genre", *IV Symposium Syriacum* 1984, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 411-417; Idem, "A Nestorian Creed: The Creed of

Shubhalmāran", *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1990, 155-162; Idem, "Admonition and Analogy: 13 Chapters from Shubhalmāran", *Aram* 5 (1993) 277-284.

7) 'Enanisho' of Bet Qoqa in Adiabene (7th century). One letter remains, unedited, on which cf. R. Beulay, *Lumière sans forme...* cit., 211.

8) John bar Penkaye (second half of 7th century). Cf. the note to his chronicle, the *Rish Melle*, *supra*, Introduction, 2, *Chronicles*, 9, p. 417.

9) 'Enanisho'. Native of Adiabene, a monk, with his brother, at the Great Monastery and then, after a journey to Jerusalem and Scete in Egypt, at Bet Awē, he collaborated with Isho'yabh III and then, at the request of George, catholicos from 661 to 680/681, wrote a *Paradise of the Fathers* in which he brought together the *Historia lausiaca*, the *Historia monastica* and the collections of sayings and lives of the desert Fathers, edited, not excellently, by E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Paradise, Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and Others. The Syriac Texts According to the Recension of 'Anan-Isho' of Beth 'Abhe*, 2 voll. (1, text; 2, English tr.), London 1904; the edit. ed. of just the *Historia lausiaca* is in *Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiacque*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 389; 398 / Syr. 169; 173 (French tr., CSCO 390; 399 / Syr. 170; 174), Louvain 1978.

10) Abraham bar Dashandad (second half of 8th century). At the school of Bashosh, in Adiabene, he taught, among others, the future catholicos Timothy I (consecrated 780) and Isho' bar Nun (consecrated 823); there remain a letter to his brother and some counsels, edited in A. Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics – Woodbrooke Studies* 7, Cambridge 1934, text: 248-255; English tr.: 186-197 – according to Mingana, in these pages Abraham cites, anonymously, a text of Simon of Taibuthch.

11) Nestorins of Nuhadra. A monk at the monastery of Mar Yozadaq, where John of Dalyatha had taken the habit, he wrote a life of Joseph Hazzaya; in 790, before being consecrated bishop, he had to abjure his "Messalian" errors before Timothy I, who had condemned, among others, John and Joseph (cf. O. Braun, "Zwei Synoden des Katholikos Timotheos I", *OrChr* 2 [1902] 302-309; text: 304-308); a letter of his survives, unedited, on whose content cf. R. Beulay, *Lumière sans forme...* cit., 217-223.

12) Berikhisho' (late 8th to early 9th century). A monk at the monastery of Kamul, he has left a work in seven tomes, unedited, on which cf. A. Rücker, "Aus dem mystischen Schrifttum nestorianischen Mönche des 6.-8. Jahrhunderts", *Morgenland. Darstellung aus Geschichte und Kultur des Ostens* 28 (1936) 38-54, 41-42; on the closeness of his teaching to that of Joseph Hazzaya cf. R. Beulay, *Lumière sans forme...* cit., 223-225.

## 2. Dadisho' Qatraya

A native of Bet Qatraye, or Qatar, the region facing the Persian Gulf along the north-east coast of the Arabian peninsula, he was a monk and then a "recluse", as we gather from his own writings. Among the best in Syriac literature for quality, erudition and style, these were composed now in the monastery of Rabkennare, now in that of the Holy Apostles, on which we have no other information, but hypothetically situated on the mountains of Bet Huzaye or Khuzistan. Here he certainly lived for a time in the monastery that Rabban Shabur, born in a village of that region between the towns of al-Ahwaz and Shushtar, had founded near Shushtar probably in the second quarter of the 7th century and where, venerated for his sanctity, he had been visited by Catholicos Isho'yabh III in the 650s. When Dadisho' wrote his major work, a commentary on the discourses of Abba Isaiah, Rabban Shabur was certainly dead, but perhaps not long dead, given the various episodes concerning him recorded in the work, which are best explained by personal memory of him, close to his time – though we cannot be sure whether the knowledge was that of Dadisho' himself or of his informant. At any rate, the way he mentions Babai the Great in some of his other works is such as to suggest that he was considered an author not far off in time, though of a decidedly earlier generation, so we may reasonably suppose that Dadisho' worked in the third quarter of the 7th century.

A passionate advocate of the solitary life in the strict sense, at a time when it seems to have been little appreciated, as the slightly later evidence of Isaac of Nineveh confirms, Dadisho' also defends a monastic, "spiritual" reading of Scripture, which diverges from the "historical", strictly Antiochene, reading of the schools and from the "homiletic" reading, of which the *Causes* or *Explanations* of the liturgical feasts examined above are probably an example. The terms of his meditation, which was developed especially in commenting on the writings of the monastic tradition (he also wrote a commentary on 'Enanisho's recently produced *Paradise of the Fathers*), are heavily Evagrian, and sober.

*Editions*: Dadisho' Qatraya, "Treatise on the Solitude of the Seven Weeks", in A. Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics – Woodbrooke Studies* 7, Cambridge 1934, 201-247 (English tr.: 76-143 – as well as the Treatise, the edition contains a series of short opuscula or extracts from further writings); Dadisho' Qatraya (VII<sup>e</sup> s.), *Commentaire du livre d'Abba Isaïe. Logoi I-XV*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 326 / Syr. 144 (French tr., CSCO 327 / Syr. 145), Louvain 1972; N. Sims-Williams, "A Sogdian Fragment of a Work of Dadisho' Qatraya", *Asia Major* 18 (1973) 88-105; A. Guillaumont, M. Albert, "Lettre de Dadisho Qatraya à Abkosh sur l'hésychia", *Cahiers d'Orientalisme X – Mémorial A.-J. Festugière. Antiquité païenne et chrétienne*, ed. E. Lucchesi, H.D. Saffrey, Geneva 1984, 235-245.

*Studies*: A. Scher, "Notice sur la vie et les oeuvres de Dadisho Qatraya", *Journal Asiatique* 7 (1906) 103-118; P. Butiolo, "Esegesi e purezza di cuore. La testimonianza



di Dadisho' Qatraya (VII sec.), nestoriano c solitario", *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 3 (1986) 201-213; N. Sims-Williams, "Dadisho' Qatraya's Commentary on the Paradise of the Fathers", *AB* 112 (1994) 33-64.

### 3. Isaac of Nineveh

Our scanty information on Isaac calls him a native, like Dadisho', of Qatar and a kinsman of a famous exegete of the school of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Gabriel, active probably in the first half of the 7th century (on whom cf. A. De Halleux, "Gabriel Qatraya", *DHGE* 19 [1981] 563-564). Here, a monk and Doctor, according to one source, he was noticed and taken to Bet Aramayc by George, catholicos of the Church of Persia from 661 to 680/681, during a journey he made to Bet Qatrayc in late spring 676 to resolve a schism that had involved the Churches of the region.

Consecrated bishop of Nineveh soon afterwards, just five months later Isaac abandoned his see with the consent of the catholicos, to lead a solitary life. He chose to go to Bet Huzaye and dwelt long years in its mountainous areas, perhaps on Mount Matut, before residing in a monastery close to the city of Shustar, founded by Rabban Shabur who lived until the 650s. Here, an old man, he died and was buried.

A celebrator of solitude and quiet, which, if patiently guarded, permit the silencing of passions and thoughts and the rapid reawakening of the soul's "natural" motions, limpid and good, upheld by meditation on Scripture and the act of frequent genuflection/prostration before the cross, Isaac insists on the comfort which the solitary life, witness of the wholly Christian "great hope" of resurrection, brings to believers, the confusion into which it throws unbelievers, held fast in the bitter gloom of their despair. The solitary life is a life of "emptying", an emptying that conforms to that of Christ (Phil 2, 7); sustained by his charity, it burns up the monk, the believer, giving him discernment of everything, merciful and silent activity, the spiritual silence of knowledge in which for a while he tastes a little of the power of the kingdom – and of this power, of the fire of its love, which burns man's heart and devours all his members, corporeal and psychical, Isaac is one of the acutest and surest witnesses. His many writings, which have reached us distributed into two or three distinct sections, attest his wealth of interpretations.

*Editions:* Mar Isaacus Ninivita, *De Perfectione Religiosa*, ed. P. Bedjan, Paris-Leipzig 1909 (text only; comprises 82 opuscula, forming the "First Part" of Isaac's writings; English tr.: A.J. Wensinck, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, Amsterdam 1923, anast. ed. Wiesbaden 1969; Italian tr. of *Discourses* 1-38 in Isacco di Ninive, *Discorsi ascetici I*, ed. M. Gallo, P. Bettolo, Rome 1984); Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian), "The Second Part", *Chapters IV-XLI*, ed. S. Brock, CSCO 554 / Syr. 224 (English tr., CSCO 555 / Syr. 225), Lovanii 1995.

*Translations:* An Italian tr. of the long second section of the "Second Part" of Isaac of Nineveh's discourses, still unedited, is in Isacco di Ninive, *Discorsi spirituali e altri opuscoli*, ed. P. Bettolo, Magnano (BI) 1990 (besides the four centuries of the *Chapters on Knowledge*, the volume contains a tr. of sections 4, 5, 32, 35, 39 of the "Second Part", edited by Brock, to which is added a short opusculum *On Creation and God* taken from a "Third Part" of Isaac's writings, handed down by a ms. of the Issayi collection in Teheran and not yet studied in its relation to the two previous collections).

*Studies:* E. Khalifé-Hachem, "Isaac le Syrien", *DSP* 7 (1971) 2041-2054 (to be corrected and supplemented on some points; it offers an overall view, with information on the ancient, medieval and humanist versions and editions of Isaac's writings); S. Brock, "St. Isaac of Nineveh and Syriac Spirituality", *Sobornost/Eastern Churches Review* 7/2, 79-89 (now in Idem, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, Poona 1988, 99-108); Idem, "St. Isaac of Nineveh: Some Newly-Discovered Works", *Sobornost/Eastern Churches Review* 8/1 (1986) 28-33 (now in Idem, *Studies... cit.*, 109-113); Idem, "St. Isaac of Nineveh (St. Isaac the Syrian)", *Studies... cit.*, 114-124; Idem, "Maggnanuta: A Technical Term in East Syrian Spirituality and its Background", *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont. Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux*, Geneva 1988, 121-129 (turning on the use of the term in the writings of Isaac and other 7th/8th-century monks: judged innovative, its "prehistory" is traced in texts of Scripture, liturgy and authors of previous generations); P. Bettolo, "Avec la charité comme but: Dieu et création dans la méditation d'Isaac de Ninive", *Irénikon* 63 (1990) 323-345; S. Brock, "Some Uses of the Term Theoria in the Writings of Isaac of Nineveh", *PdO* 20 (1995) 407-419; H.M. Hunt, *The Soul's Sorrow in Syrian Patristic Thought*, SP 33, 1997, 530-533 (brief, acute contribution devoted, despite the title, just to Isaac of Nineveh); P. Bettolo, "Prigionieri dello Spirito. Libertà creaturale ed 'eschaton' in Isacco di Ninive", *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 4 (1999) 343-363. Cf. *supra*, GREEK LITERATURE OF SYRIA, pp. 225-228.

### 4. Simon of Taibutheth

We have only minimal information about Simon of Taibutha or Taibutheth, "called Luke, disciple of Rabban Shabur, Huzite", a monk and one of the best physicians of his generation (hence perhaps the nickname Luke). We know, e.g., that he was the author of various works, medical and spiritual, including a lost *Life of Mar Gani*, a discourse on the cell, various minor opuscula and/or extracts, surviving in a single codex, including a tasteful and instructive episode relating to Rabban Shabur, and finally a *Book of Grace* (grace in Syriac is *taibutha*, so he may have been called Simon "of grace" from the book he wrote and by which he was known), in seven centuries, which recounts memories of monks and hermits who had lived and still lived on Mount Matut. Since Mar Gani, whose life he seems to have told, received the monastic habit from Abraham of Kashkar, called the Great († 588), on Mount Izla and then founded a monastery near Kashkar itself, in southern Babylonia; since Rabban Shabur must have lived in Bet Huzaye at least until the 650s; and since Mount Matut, where Isaac of Nineveh lived soon after 676 before going down to the monastery of Rabban Shabur, is in that

same region, where was also the city of Bet Lapat or Gondisapor, then famous for its schools of medicine and theology, both subject to the jurisdiction of the local bishop: all these allow us to place Simon in the last third of the 7th century, in Bet Huzaye, in circles very close to those that gathered around Rabban Shabur or, more precisely, around the monastery he had founded.

A learned monk, like others of his generation (he commented on Pseudo-Dionysius, he knew Evagrius, Mark, Isaiah, Macarius and Basil), he insisted particularly on the teaching of the "good of the soul", poverty and "idioteia", which alone give believers that "living and intelligible" light which is the light of the humility, meekness and freedom of Christ and of his kingdom, which comes of itself, "not through observances". The cross of Jesus, cross of ignominy and glory, is in fact the sole "justice of all", "salvation of all", nor does the Christian have any other "work" than that of believing this.

*Editions:* A. Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics – Woodbrooke Studies* 7, Cambridge 1934, 282-320 (English tr.: 10-69 – contains a series of opuscula and extracts from a Book by Simon, which forms section XXXII of a *Syriac Recueil d'Auteurs ascétiques nestoriens du VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, as J.-M. Vosté, in a study appearing under that title in *Angelicum* 6 [1929] 143-206, designates the ms. of 1289, from a copy of which Mingana took the material he published; an Italian tr., including the version of a further unedited section [X] of the collection indicated above, containing a *Discourse Spoken on the Day of the Consecration of a Cell* by Simon, is in Simone di Taibuteh, *Violenza e grazia – La cultura del cuore*, ed. P. Bettolo, Rome 1992).

*Studies:* G. Bunge, "Mar Isaak von Ninive und sein 'Buch der Gnade' ", *Ostkirchliche Studien* 34/1 (1985) 3-22 (relating to an unedited text which manuscript tradition attributes to Isaac of Nineveh, but which must be returned to Simon, as demonstrated by D. Miller in his introduction to the *Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*, Boston [MA] 1984, LXXXI-LXXXV, and by the following study); P. Bettolo, "Povertà e conoscenza. Appunti sulle Centurie gnostiche della tradizione evagriana in Siria", *PdO* 15 (1988-1989) 107-125.

### 5. John of Dalyatha

John came from northern Bet Nuhadra, the region that coincides with the Nineveh plain, between the Mesopotamian steppe and the mountains of Qardu. In early youth he frequented the monastery, some 20 kilometres from his village, that Mar Afnimaran had founded in the 7th century after abandoning Bet Awē due to an accusation of "Messalianism", and in which one of his disciples, Maran Zeka, bishop of Hedatta after 741, still lived. John later took the monastic habit in the more distant monastery of Mar Yuzadaq, in Qardu, founded at the time of the catholicos and patriarch Isho'yabh II (628-645); soon after John's death, in 790, its monks were caught up in an accusation of "Messalianism". His teacher here was another disciple of Mar Afnimaran, blessed Stephen, while his

spiritual father was Jacob the Seer, a novice at Bet Awē from 647 to 648 who had then fled that monastery because of the brothers' "jealousy". These dates allow us to place John's novitiate in the first years or decades of the 8th century, in circles perhaps not wholly conformed to the stricter orthodoxy of the Church of Persia. After a period of common life, John retired to the mountain of Bet Dalyatha, probably beyond Qardu, between the mountains that rise to the east and north-east of that region. Here he composed at least part of his works, before old age forced him to return to Qardu, where he died at an advanced age, surrounded by various disciples, in the monastery of Jacob Abila (the monk), which they had rebuilt.

Accused by Timothy I in 786/787 or 790, in a synod to which we will return (see p. 486), of theological and Christological errors (in a homily *On the Contemplation of the Holy Trinity*, it was said, he had upheld Sabellian ideas by speaking of the Son and the Spirit as Powers of the Father, and elsewhere too he had accused of "delirium" those who denied to the nature of the assumed man the vision of the nature of Him who had assumed him), John in fact developed a careful meditation on the divine "glory", distinct from His essence, which allowed him to "force" the narrower interpretations of the dogmatic tradition of his Church – as formalized in its later pronouncements, which aimed to exclude any transcendence by the creature, even the man Jesus, of creaturely limits – while respecting its letter and requirements. A man of "ardent desires", he has a style that favours the liveliness and tenderness of the affections and experiences he brings to expression, yet indebted to the teaching of the Macarian or Evagrian texts, long meditated, which he interprets in an original way.

*Editions:* B.E. Colless, *The Mysticism of John Saba*, Melbourne 1969 (thesis containing an edition, with English tr., of John of Dalyatha's *Homilies*); R. Beulay, *La collection des Lettres de Jean de Dalyatha*, PO 39/3, Turnhout 1978 (with French tr.).

*Studies:* General introduction: R. Beulay, "Jean de Dalyatha", *DSP* 8 (1974) 449-452. B.E. Colless, "Le mystère de Jean Saba", *OrSyr* 8 (1963) 87-106; R. Beulay, "Jean de Dalyatha et sa Lettre XV<sup>e</sup>", *PdO* 2 (1971) 261-279; B.E. Colless, "The Biographies of John Saba", *PdO* 3 (1972) 45-63; Idem, "The Mysticism of John Saba", *OCP* 39 (1973) 83-102; R. Beulay, "Précisions touchant l'identité et la biographie de Jean Saba de Dalyatha", *PdO* 8 (1977-1978) 87-116; Idem, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha, mystique syrien-oriental du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1990.

### 6. Joseph Hazzaya

Joseph was of Persian origin, a Mazdean, son of a "magus" who had become "head of magi", i.e. in charge of the clergy in a great temple. A native of the city of Nimrod, probably on the Tigris, south of Mosul, aged seven he was captured by the troops of Caliph 'Umar II (717-720), who had suppressed an insurrection of its inhabitants – which allows

us to place Joseph's birth between about 710 and 713. Sold as a slave first to an Arab and then to a Christian of Qardu, and impressed by the life led by the monks of the monastery of Mar John of Kamul near which he was living, he chose baptism. For his zeal, his master enfranchised him and he became a monk at the monastery of Abba Sliwa in Bet Nuhadra. Retiring later to Qardu to live a solitary life, he was then made hegumen of the monastery of Mar Basima there, which he left for a new retreat, this time in Adiabene, on Mount Sinai, between the Great and Little Zab. Put once more at the head of a monastery, that of Rabban Bokhtisho', near the place of his hermitage, he held this position perhaps until his death at an advanced age. The uncertainty depends on the ambiguity of a notice of the condemnation of him and other monks slightly earlier than himself at the synod that met in 786/787 or 790 under the presidency of Catholicos Timothy I (779-823). It seems that he was removed from his monastery at this time, and this seems confirmed by the fact that he was not buried there, but in that of Mar Athqen.

Joseph was the author of numerous works, part of which he wrote under the name of 'Abdisho', assumed by a brother of his after conversion and entry into monastic life. Little of this has survived, however, and still less is edited. Despite this there is enough evidence to show Joseph as a writer capable of working out a vast, clear synthesis of the themes, thoughts and experiences put forward by earlier authors and monks, though this clear systematic preoccupation, oriented mainly on Evagrius teaching, does not replace or attenuate the effectiveness of his proof of the spiritual conduct of which he writes.

*General introduction:* R. Beulay, "Joseph Hazzaya", *DSP* 8 (1974) 1341-1349; Rabban Jausep Hazzaya, *Briefe über das geistlichen Leben und verwandte Schriften*, with Introduction and tr. by G. Bunge, Trier 1982 (contains a general introduction to the author and an annotated translation of some of his important writings, still unedited, with good information on their manuscript tradition).

*Editions:* Joseph Hazzaya, *Writings*, in A. Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics – Woodbrooke Studies* 7, Cambridge 1934, 256-281 (English tr.: 148-184; comprises a "fifth letter" of Joseph, 256-260 [text], 178-184 [tr.], of which a longer, but still partial, version has been edited and translated into French by E. Khalifé-Hachem in "Deux textes du Pseudo-Nil identifiés", *Melito* 5 [1969] 17-59, here 24 ff., from a ms. of far from excellent quality – so G. Bunge in *Briefe...* cit., p. 65, no. 91, who gives a German tr. of it, on the basis of the whole manuscript tradition, on pp. 239-259 [nos. 260-262]; two chapters, perhaps, of a work *On Spiritual Contemplation*, 262-272 [text] 148-162 [tr.] [German tr. in *Briefe...* cit., 263-268, 269-287]; an opusculum on the motions produced in the intellect at the moment of prayer, 272-274 [text], 163-165 [tr.] [German tr. in *Briefe...* cit., 289-294]; and a further letter, the second of the two later edited by Beulay in the appendix to the letters of John of Dalyatha); Joseph Hazzaya, *Two letters*, in R. Beulay, *La collection des lettres de Jean de Dalyatha*, PO 39/3, Turnhout 1978, Appendix II, 500-521 (with French tr.: these are letters 48-49 of John's epistolary corpus, to be attributed to Joseph – cf.

ibid., Introduction, 295-297); Joseph Hazzaya, *Lettre sur les trois étapes de la vie monastique*, ed. P. Harb, F. Graffin, with the collaboration of M. Albert, PO 45/2, Turnhout 1992 (formerly edited and translated as a work of Philoxenus: cf. bibliography and discussion of the problem: ibid., Introduction, 263-269).

*Studies:* A. Seher, "Joseph Hazzaya écrivain syriaque du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 3 (1910) 45-63; A. Guillaumont, "Sources de la doctrine de Joseph Hazzaya", *OrSy* 3 (1958) 3-24; E.J. Sherry, "The Life and Works of Joseph Hazzaya", *The Seed of Wisdom. Essays in Honour of T.J. Meek*, London 1964, 78-91; R. Beulay, "Des Centuries de Joseph Hazzaya retrouvées?", *PdO* 3 (1972) 5-44; G. Bunge, "Le 'lieu de la limpidité'. À propos d'un apophtegme énigmatique: Budge II, 494", *Jrénikon* 55 (1982) 7-18; N. Séd, "La Shekhinta et ses amis 'araméens'", *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont. Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux*, Geneva 1988, 233-242 (the study begins by pointing out the targumic uses of the divine shekhinta in some places of the *Peshitta* of *Chronicles*, then explores its recurrences in Ephrem, Isaac of Nineveh and Joseph Hazzaya, whom in particular it credits with "having grasped, through the splendour of the Shekhinta, the figure of a Woman, ruler of the Universe" [242]); M. Albert, "La doctrine spirituelle de Joseph Hazzaya", *Centre d'études des religions du livre – De la conversion*, ed. J.-C. Altias, Paris 1997, 205-215.

## THE LEARNED TRADITION OF THE JACOBITE CHURCH

### 1. Jacob of Edessa

Born in a village near Antioch in c. 633, in his youth Jacob entered the monastery of Qenneshre, on the left bank of the Euphrates, opposite Europos, founded in 521 by John bar Aphthonia († 537), learned author of, among other things, a biography of Severus [though cf. p.196], who had made it a centre of Greek and Syriac studies (on him cf. the life edited and translated into French by F. Nau in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 7 [1902] 97-135). Here taught and resided the aged bishop Severus Sebokht († 667), translator at least of Paul the Persian's commentary on the *De interpretatione* of Aristotle, whose writings on logic he had widely discussed in individual letters, following the example of the Neoplatonist Aristotelian authors of Alexandria, and also writer of important works of astronomy (on him cf. G.J. Reinink, "Severus Sebokht's Brief an den Periodeutes Jonan. Einige Fragen zur aristotelischen Logik", *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, Rome 1983, 97-107). Jacob later left the monastery and, after a journey to study at Alexandria, settled at Edessa, where in 684 he was consecrated bishop of the local Church by Patriarch Athanasius II, himself a man of study, formed in Severus' school at Qenneshre. His episcopate was brief, however, due to the growing difficulties that his reforming and disciplinary work encountered among the Edessene clergy. After four years, he left his Church and retired to lead a monastic life of study and teaching. He made translations and wrote learned commentaries, rich in

scientific notes, on Scripture, especially the Old Testament. He also compiled a *Chronicle* that continued Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* (cf. *supra*, Introduction 2. Chronicles 10, p. 417) and composed a philosophical *Enchiridion* dealing with the concepts, essential for Trinitarian theology and Christology, of essence, hypostasis, nature and *prosopon*. His minor writings include one on orthography. Twenty years later, however, on the death of his successor, he was recalled and came back to occupy the see of Edessa, if only for a few months, since soon afterwards he died during a journey, 5 June 708.

*Editions*: G. Phillips, *Scholia on Some Passages of the Old Testament by Mar Jacob, Bishop of Edessa*, London 1864 (with English tr.); *Jacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron seu in opus creationis libri septem*, ed. I.-B. Chabot, CSCO 92 / Syr. 44, Paris 1928 (Latin tr. by A. Vaschalde, CSCO 97 / Syr. 48, Louvain 1932); K.-E. Rignell, *A Letter of Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarb concerning Ecclesiastical Canons*, Lund 1979; M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, Cambridge 1981 (contains *An Epistle of Jacob of Edessa*, 145-152).

*Studies*: General introduction: H.J.W. Drijvers, "Jakob von Edessa", *TRE* 16 (1987) 468-470.

T. Jansma, "The Provenance of the Last Sections in the Roman Edition of Ephraem's Commentary on Exodus", *Muséon* 85 (1972) 155-169; S. Brock, "Jacob of Edessa's Discourse on the Myron", *OrChr* 63 (1979) 20-36; F. Graffin, "Jacques d'Édesse réviseur des Homélies de Sévère d'Antioche d'après le ms syriaque BM Add. 12159", *Symposium Syriacum* 1976, Rome 1978, 243-255; A. Salvesen, "Spirits in Jacob of Edessa's Revision on Samuel", *Aram* 5 (1993) 481-490.

## 2. George of the Arabs

Born around 640 in a village near Antioch, George received his first education from a *periodeutes*, an itinerant member of the clergy, in this case Antiochene. He probably studied at the monastery of Qenneshre, then the centre of the revival of Aristotelian studies, centred on the Stagyrite's *Organon*, in the Jacobite circles of the Syrian Church – a revival sustained in those years especially by Severus Sebokt, Jacob of Edessa and Athanasius of Balad, from 683/684 to the year of his death (687) patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church. In November 686 or during 687, perhaps at Athanasius' initiative, George was consecrated bishop of the Arab tribes of Hirta. Henceforth, to his scholarly activity he added the writing of homilies, of which some traces survive. In 708, on Jacob's death, George completed his *Hexaemeron*. He died in 724.

*Editions and translations*: George of the Arabs, *Letter to the priest Jesus*, in P. de Lagarde, *Analecta syriaca*, Leipzig 1858, 108-134 (German tr. [partial]: V. Ryssel, *Ein Brief Georgs, Bischofs der Araber, an der Presbyter Jesus, aus dem Syrischen übersetzt und erläutert. Mit einer Einleitung über sein Leben und seiner Schriften*, Gotha 1883; French tr. [partial] by M.-J. Pierre, in: Aphraate le sage persan, *Les Exposés*, 2, SCh 359, Paris 1989, 966-983); V. Ryssel, "Poemi siriaci di Giorgio

vescovo degli Arabi (VIII sec.)", *AAL* 4, 9 (1892) 1-93 (contains, among other things, the long recension of a *memro* on myron [1-33] and one on the life of solitaires [34-46]; German tr.: Idem, *Georg des Araberbischofs Gedichte und Briefe*, Leipzig 1891 – which also comprises the translation of various letters, including one to the priest Jacob, his *synkellos*, from which are taken some *scholia* to the discourses of Gregory Nazianzen: cf. A. De Halleux, "Les commentaires syriaques des discours de Grégoire de Nazianze – un premier sondage", *Muséon* 98 [1985] 103-147, esp. 109-112); R.H. Connolly, H.W. Codrington, *Two Commentaries on the Jacobite Liturgy by George Bishop of the Arab Tribes and Moses bar Kepha: together with the Syriac Anaphora of St. James and a Document Entitled "The Book of Life"*, London 1913 (George's text was previously translated by V. Ryssel in *Georg des Araberbischofs Gedichte...* cit., 36-43; his sources are studied in S. Brock, "Some Early Syriac Baptismal Commentaries", *OCP* 46 [1980] 20-61); G. Furlani, "Le categorie e gli ermeneutici di Aristotele nella versione siriana di Giorgio delle Nazioni", *AAL* 6, 5/1 (1933) 1-66; Idem, "Il Primo Libro dei Primi Analitici di Aristotele nella versione siriana di Giorgio delle Nazioni", *AAL* 6, 5/3 (1935) 143-230; Idem, "Il Secondo Libro dei Primi Analitici di Aristotele nella versione siriana di Giorgio delle Nazioni", *AAL* 6, 6/3 (1937) 231-287; Idem, "Il proemio di Giorgio delle Nazioni al primo libro dei Primi Analitici di Aristotele", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 18 (1939) 116-130 (with Greek-Italian tr.); Idem, "Sul commento di Giorgio delle Nazioni al secondo libro degli Analitici Anteriori di Aristotele", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 20 (1943) 229-238 (with Greek-Italian tr.); F. Rilliet, "Une homélie métrique sur la fête des hosannas attribuée à Georges évêque des Arabes", *OrChr* 74 (1990) 72-102; George, Bishop of the Arabs, *A Homily on Blessed Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch*, ed. K.E. McVey, CSCO 530 / Syr. 216 (English tr., CSCO 531 / Syr. 217), Lovanii 1993.

*Studies*: Cf. the pages on George's life and doctrines especially in V. Ryssel, *Ein Brief...* cit., and *Georg des Araberbischofs Gedichte...* cit.; and in K.E. McVey, *A Homily*, introduction to the tr.; D. Miller, "George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes, on True Philosophy", *Aram* 5 (1993) 303-320.

## THEODORE BAR KŌNAI

Theodore bar Kōnai was a monk at Kashkar, in Bet Aramaye, at whose school, founded probably towards the end of the 6th century, he taught biblical exegesis. The work by which he is known to us, completed probably around 792, bears the title *Book of Scholia*, in accordance with the custom of calling thus the collections of brief clarifications on places or arguments of particular obscurity in Scripture or theological debate. What Theodore proposed was thus the composition of a manual that would introduce students to the exegesis practised in the school, i.e. to the teaching of the Interpreter *par excellence* of Scripture among the "Nestorians", Theodore of Mopsuestia. Of the eleven treatises that compose the work, nine correspond to this project, containing notes in the form of questions and answers on methodological, philosophical-theological and strictly exegetical questions. At the end of the ninth treatise, a copyist's note gives us to understand that here probably ended

a first redaction of the text. There are two further "books", added to the former, in which Theodore draws up a defence of Christianity against Islam (Kashkar was close to the Arab city of al-Wasit, founded in 702, so relations with the Islamic world were particularly intense in the region) and then a list of heresies, which contains some items of extraordinary interest. The *Book of Scholia* survives in two recensions, of differing lengths and with a partly different internal organization of materials.

*Editions:* A. Scher, *Theodorus bar Koni, Liber Scholiorum* (Seert recension), CSCO 55 and 69 / Syr. 19 and 26 (Syr. II, 65 and 66), Paris 1910 and 1912 (anast. ed., Louvain 1960; French tr.: R. Hespel, R. Draguet, *Théodore bar Koni, Livre des Scolies I-II*, CSCO 431-432 / Syr. 187-188, Louvain 1981-1982); R. Hespel, *Théodore bar Koni, Livre des Scolies (recension d'Urmiah)*, CSCO 447 / Syr. 193 (French tr., CSCO 448 / Syr. 194), Louvain 1983; R. Hespel, *Théodore bar Koni, Livre des Scolies (recension d'Urmiah), Les collections annexées par Sylvain de Qardu*, CSCO 464 / Syr. 197 (French tr., CSCO 465 / Syr. 198), Louvain 1984.

*Studies:* L. Brade, *Untersuchungen zum Scholienbuch des Theodoros bar Konai*, Wiesbaden 1975; S.H. Griffith, "Chapter Ten of the 'Scholion': Theodore bar Koni's Apology for Christianity", *OCP* 47 (1981) 158-188; Idem, "Theodore bar Koni's Scholion: A Nestorian 'Summa contra gentiles' from the First Abbasid Century", *East of Byzantium, Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, R.W. Thomson, Washington (DC) 1982, 53-72; S. Gero, "Ophite Gnosticism according to Theodore bar Koni's Liber Scholiorum", *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, G.J. Reinink, Rome 1987, 265-274; D. Kruisheer, "Theodore Bar Koni's Ktaba d-'eskolion as a Source for the Study of Early Mandaeism", *JEOL* 33 (1993-1994 <1995>) 151-169.

## VII PATRISTIC TEXTS IN COPTIC

by TITO ORLANDI

### INTRODUCTION

Coptic was one of the languages commonly used in late antique Egypt, and is attested especially among the Christians, from the 3rd to the 9th century (cf. A.S. Attiya, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, s.v. Linguistics, 1-227). The others were Greek (in common use until about the 7th century) and Arabic (from the 7th century on), as well as Egyptian proper, in the state known as "demotic" (until the 5th century?), and Aramaic, used by the Jews. The coexistence of different languages produced a vast phenomenon of bilingualism and multilingualism in the more educated part of the population, and consequently peculiar characteristics in literary output. Coptic probably came into being as an artificial literary language, with the aim of recovering as much as possible of the old Egyptian culture in a Christian world. It was built on the structure of the Egyptian spoken at the time (2nd-3rd centuries), using Egyptian and Greek vocabulary indiscriminately. Greek also had a great influence on its syntactic structure, since Egyptian syntax was of little use in rendering complicated constructs.

It is customary to distinguish in Coptic a number of dialects (Sahidic, Bohairic, Achemimic, Subachmimic, Oxyrhynchite, etc.), but the sense of such a distinction is hard to ascertain, since we do not know with sufficient exactness what sounds were represented by the different graphemes found in the manuscripts, nor is it possible to state with certainty whether the different graphematic systems corresponded to geographically identifiable varieties, or how. At any rate, so-called Sahidic was the literary language *par excellence* up to the 8th century, Bohairic from the 9th century. Literary *corpora* are also found in Subachmimic (Manichaean texts) and Oxyrhynchite (biblical texts).

Texts that may be called patristic form almost the whole of Coptic literature, which arose and developed within the Christian Church of Egypt; and the reasons for any interest the patristic scholar may nourish towards such texts are many and diverse. Coptic texts may be original,



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from the Council of Chalcedon (451)  
to John of Damascus († 750)

Edited by ANGELO DI BERARDINO

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